

1925-1945



MARCH

“Speech on Bolshevization of the American Party to the Organizational Conference of the Communist International, Moscow, March 18, 1925,” by William Z. Foster

Beginning March 15, 1925, a conference was held in Moscow, chaired by Osip Piatnitsky, dedicated to the restructuring of Communist Parties around the world on the basis of “factory nuclei” “so-called “Bolshevization.” William Z. Foster, representative of the Workers Party of America, was elected to the 10 member Presidium of this gathering (the

candidates nominated *en bloc* by Piatnitsky and elected unanimously). On March 18, Foster addressed the gathering on the reorganizational situation in the Workers Party of America. Restructuring of the WPA on the basis of factory nuclei was only initiated at the time of the 5th World Congress of the Comintern in the summer of 1924, Foster said, noting that the fragmented nature of the American Party—split into 17 language federations—hampered the ready adoption of this scheme. Instead there was a general state of passive resistance, institutional inertia for the preservation of the current system, in which the center dealt with local organizations only through the intermediary of the Central Bureaus of the various Language Federations. Foster stated that of some 19,000 members of the WPA only 2200 were members of English-language groups, although he added that about half of the Federationists knew English well enough to engage in party work.

“On Bolshevization and a Labor Party: Speech to the 5th Plenum of the Enlarged Executive Committee of the Communist International, Moscow—March 30, 1925,” by James P. Cannon

Speech by Workers Party of America delegate to the 5th Enlarged Plenum of the ECCI (March 21-April 6, 1925) during the period of discussion about the political situation in the various countries and the next tasks of the Comintern in the restructuring of the constituent communist parties upon a basis of workplace party nuclei (so-called “Bolshevization”). With regard to Bolshevization, Cannon cites the lack of a tradition of revolutionary mass action by the working class, weak trade union organizations and the associated neglect of party work in the unions, and a fragmented party organization of just 20,000—of whom only 2,000 were enrolled in English-speaking organizations. “The Language Federation form of organization is absolutely incompatible with a Bolshevik organization,” Cannon emphatically states, adding that “We must have a centralized form of organization or we will never have a Bolshevik Party.” With respect to establishment of a Labor Party in America, Cannon states that “the organized American workers are not yet class-conscious enough to develop a labor party on a mass basis.” The situation was entirely different in the United States than in Great Britain, Cannon argued, citing the strength of the British union movement and long historical standing of the British Labour Party. In contrast, all attempts to create a Labor Party in America in the preceding two years had been “disastrous failures.” “It would be premature to form a labor

party now, and even dangerous, for we would quickly become isolated from [the] growing mass labor movement," Cannon declares.

SEPTEMBER

"Lenin and Trotsky: A Comment on Max Eastman's Book *Since Lenin Died*," by N. Krupskaya. [September 1925] This article by the widow of V.I. Ul'ianov (Lenin) was written for publication in the American Communist press in response to the 1925 publication of *Since Lenin Died*, by Max Eastman. Krupskaya is harsh in her criticism of Eastman, characterizing his book as a "collection of petty gossip" and noting that Eastman "invents various fictions" by falsely characterizing Lenin's letters to the XIII Party Congress as a "testament" and further alleging these documents were "concealed." Krupskaya also alleges her personal correspondence with Trotsky was misrepresented in Eastman's book, that Trotsky from Krupskaya's correspondence "could not draw...the conclusion that Lenin regarded him as his successor, or regarded him as understanding his views better than anybody else," as Eastman alleged. Rather, Krupskaya says that Lenin merely "considered Trotsky a talented worker faithful in the interests of the revolution and to the working class""among others. Krupskaya also notes that she had stood in opposition to Trotsky in the current struggle in the Russian Communist Party and written against his *Lessons of October* in the pages of *Pravda*.

OCTOBER

"From Propaganda Society to Communist Party: Pages from Party History, 1919-1925, by C.E. Ruthenberg. This 1925 article by the Executive Secretary of the Workers (Communist) Party reviews the history of the American Communist Party from its origins. This material first appeared in the pages of the party's theoretical magazine, *The Workers Monthly*, in October of 1925 under the title "From the Third Through the Fourth Convention of the Workers (Communist) Party of America" and was subsequently issued as a pamphlet by the same name.

"South Slavic Convention Unanimous for CEC and Comintern" (*Daily Worker*) [events of Oct. 17-20, 1925] Brief recap of the 1925 convention of the Yugoslav section of the Workers (Communist) Party, attended by 29 delegates in Chicago, said to represent 1,360 members (i.e. about 8% of the party). The delegates heard a keynote report by General Secretary C.E. Ruthenberg and obligingly provided unanimous support for a new restructuring of the party on the basis of shop and street nuclei and the transformation of language federations into "language fractions" which would soon have the effect of cutting party membership in half. A new 14 member bureau to govern the South Slavic section was elected, including 8 residents of Chicago who would constitute an "Executive Council" for daily affairs, with C. Novak as secretary. Also of note a mention of an inner dispute involving a "Comrade Fisher" on the losing end; whether this individual is the "Ed Fisher" of the 1920 factional war remains unclear.

"The Party's Finnish Section Reorganization Commission Is Planning Big Drive" (*Daily Worker*) [event of Oct. 19, 1925] On Oct. 19, 1925, a special four member "Executive Subcommittee" of the Finnish Reorganization Commission held its first meeting to plan for an orderly transformation of the Finnish Federation of the workers party, organized around language branches, to a restructured Finnish section, based upon so-called "shop nuclei." More than 100 of the most important Finnish branches were identified, with these to hold special meetings to hear a representative of the Reorganization Commission and to reorganize themselves. A lengthy list of these speakers were identified, including General Secretary, Jay Lovestone, James P. Cannon, and top Finnish leaders such as Henry Puro, Elis Sulkanen, Fahle Burman, K.A. Suvanto, and others. This article from *The Daily Worker* is particularly valuable for its list of 121 communities and towns in which the Workers Party of America maintained Finnish-language branches.

'One Step Forward — Two Steps Backward' for Mr. Green, by Jay Lovestone [Oct. 21, 1925] In the aftermath of the 1925 Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labor, Workers (Communist) Party official Jay Lovestone identifies and attempts to interpret a shift in the line of new AF of L President William Green towards the establishment of a labor party in America. Previously opposing establishment of a labor party in principle, as inimical to "American ideals," Green in 1925 acknowledged the reasonableness of the labor party ideal "in principle" — albeit to be established at some later date, owing to the agrarian essence of America. "There may be a time when we in America can organize a labor party, but we will have to change from an agricultural into a semi-industrial country before we can make a success along that line," Green is quoted as having said. Lovestone lashes out at this rationale for delay, providing census data to illustrate a steady decline in agricultural employment and growth of the wage-earning working class. The AF of L's historic political slogan "reward your friends and punish your enemies" is characterized by Lovestone as a "dastardly policy" of "reward your enemies and hang yourself." Lovestone intimates that the AF of L's non-partisan approach is being overwhelmed by the numerical growth of the working class in the United States.

New Activity Under New Form," by William F. Kruse [Oct. 23, 1925] The forthcoming restructuring of the Workers (Communist) Party is given an upbeat spin in this article from *The Daily Worker*. Kruse makes clear that the elimination of casual members in the language federations was not only expected but welcomed by the American party leadership. The "old territorial form of organization" being abandoned was a legacy of social democracy and its obsession with the bourgeois-democratic electoral process, Kruse notes, whereas the new form of organization was "the fruit of worldwide revolutionary experience." Kruse notes that opposition to the change is concentrated in the Finnish and German federations. He implies that the concern is misplaced, noting that in the Minneapolis district of the Workers Party, out of more than 60 towns in which the WPA had a presence, in over 50 there was only a single Finnish or Yugoslav branch, reducing the difficulty of forming multilingual shop nuclei. The loss of some members would be "undeniable, and also unavoidable," writes Kruse. "Elements, weak, unassimilated and unassimilable, will drop out. But by far the largest part of our proletarian elements will not only remain but will be heartened by the change to increase their strength." A network of "worker clubs" would fulfill the role formerly played by Finnish socialist halls, Kruse indicates. Those members lost in the change would be individuals "who 'belong' for reasons of

social or lingual gregariousness” who were “no material for our revolution, which must come from the workshop.”

Towards Party Reorganization, by Jay Lovestone [Oct. 24, 1925] details of the forthcoming reorganization of the WPA on the basis of “shop” and “street nuclei” instead of the historical “parliamentary district” and “federation” form of organization in question-and-answer format. Lovestone reveals that “under no circumstances should any of the existing language branches maintain themselves as branches, in name or in fact, after party reorganization” -- that the new “international” units based upon the workplace (if three or more party members are present) or neighborhood are to be permanent. Members speaking non-English languages are to establish “workingmen’s clubs” open to all who “in general, the idea of the class struggle, regardless of how little he knows about or how unready he happens to be at this time for party membership,” Lovestone states. These are to be formed with a goal “to draw as many as possible such non-Communist workers into these clubs so that we may have the chance to propagate Communism amongst them,” he says. Members in workplaces with three or more party members are to take the initiative of establishing shop nuclei themselves, Lovestone declares, adding “don’t wait for anybody to come around and try to organize you.” The first task of every member of such nuclei is to obtain one or two new party members. “You will see how your shop nucleus will grow, how much new blood you will add to your group through your being active, in accordance with the instructions given in the CEC reorganization plan,” Lovestone optimistically asserts.

American Negro Labor Meet Opens With Gigantic Mass Demonstration in Chicago.

(*Daily Worker*) [event of Oct. 25, 1925 Concurrently with reorganization of the Workers Party of America on the basis of shop and street nuclei came the establishment of a new Communist organization for propaganda amongst American black workers -- the American Negro Labor Congress. This short article from the (*Daily Worker*) makes note of the commencement of the first national congress of the ANLC, held in Chicago from Oct. 25-31, 1925. A very brief daily agenda is presented, to conclude with an “international ball” on Saturday, Oct. 31, “when workers of all races will mingle.” The last-mentioned event was intended as a fundraiser for the new organization, the article notes. Headquarters of the ANLC were located at 3456 S. Indiana Ave. and the convention held at the Metropolitan Community Center, 3118 S. Giles Avenue, Chicago, a few blocks away. Neither building is still extant. 1926

UN-DATED

“The Workers’ (Communist) Party: What It Is and Why Workers Should Join It,” by C.E. Ruthenberg. Text of a small propaganda pamphlet encouraging wage-workers to join the Workers’ (Communist) Party. According to Ruthenberg, the W(C)PA comprised the political organization necessary to “give leadership” to the workers’ struggle against capitalism and to “direct it along the road that will carry the workers forward to the Workers’ and Farmers’ Government and victory for the new social order.” To advance this task, the W(C)PA would support the daily struggles of the workers and farmers for relief, work to amalgamate craft unions into industrial unions, work to organize the unorganized industrial workers into unions,

work for the establishment of and affiliation with a Labor Party, work for Negro organization and the struggle of black Americans for “complete social equality,” and fight against American imperialism abroad.

FEBRUARY

“A Communist Trial in Pittsburgh,” by A. Jakira [Feb. 1926] Eyewitness account of the trial in Pittsburgh of Edward Horacek, a draftsman and member of the Machinists Union who was arrested and tried for his activities as a member of the Workers Party of America. Horacek was taken as a part of the April 27 and 28, 1923 raids by federal agents, state policemen, and county detectives on the Pittsburgh headquarters of the Workers Party and was the first of 9 defendants to go to trial. Jakira tells the familiar tale of a zealous prosecution with its lying witnesses before a stacked jury and a biased judge. The jury convicted Horacek for having back in 1923 distributed the printed program of the WPA (a registered political party in the state of Pennsylvania) and for having been invoiced for 50 copies of *The Liberator*, a WPA artistic-political magazine “sold on newsstands and bookstores in practically every city of this country.” No articles from *The Liberator* had been introduced into evidence during the trial to demonstrate that the publication was seditious, nor was any over act by Horacek alleged—Horacek was simply found guilty of 2 of the 8 charges made against him for his membership in the WPA and for distributing its literature. The conviction meant a potential sentence of 20 years in prison, writes Jakira. Includes a pen-and-ink caricature of Henry J. Lennon, chief of the Pittsburgh anti-red unit, chief prosecution witness in the trial who was accused by Jakira of having perjured himself on the stand.

About the Annual Meeting of Työmies,” by K.E. Heikkinen [Feb. 13, 1926] Summary of the factional struggle in the Finnish Federation of the Workers (Communist) Party of America in the aftermath of the organization’s 1925 reorganization program, which put the party on the basis of shop nuclei instead of the previous language federation-based system. The party loyalist Heikkinen uses the term “party crisis” to describe the 1925 situation and writes here to chronicle the downfall of former member of the Central Executive Committee Henry Askeli, who was removed as editor of the party’s central region Finnish daily, *Työmies (The Worker)* as an oppositionist. Reading between the lines, it appears that Askeli defended the semi-autonomy of the Finnish Federation from growing encroachment on the part of the W(C)PA’s Central Executive Committee. It seems the Superior, Wisconsin subdistrict of the Minneapolis district was the heart of this oppositional activity, with many on the staff of *Työmies* supportive of Askeli. Askeli was cashiered at the 4th National Convention of the WPA, held in Chicago late in August 1925. Askeli issued an article or document about one week after the Aug. 30 close of the convention, detailing his own view of the situation, marking a formalization of his oppositional perspective. The editorial staff attempted to defend Askeli from dismissal on technical grounds, according to this article, but the effort was turned aside by a strong majority at the annual shareholders’ meeting.

God, the Supreme Shoe Manufacturer,” by Robert Minor [Feb. 27, 1926] This article by cartoonist and Workers (Communist) Party functionary Robert Minor was written in conjunction with the ongoing Brockton, MA blasphemy trial of Lithuanian Communist newspaper editor Anthony Bimba minces no words in its defense of “the revolutionary materialist philosophy.”

The archaic law under which Bimba was charged was a relic of the age “when Massachusetts was a colony and was steadily burning witches, and which in its first form imposed the death penalty for atheists,” Minor indicates. Minor observes the relationship of the clergy to the ruling class and asserts that “it is necessary, from the point of view of the manufacturing interests, to make the “people” (that is, the working people) believe in some variation of the god myth.” In opposition to this, the Communist “helps to free the working class of the superstitious conception of the universe, thereby helping the workers to direct their energies toward the liberation from the rule of the capitalist class,” Minor declares. Minor likens the proceedings against Bimba to the recently completed “Scopes Monkey Trial” and asserts that “Bimba denied the Supreme manufacturer, and all of the little shoe manufacturers of Massachusetts, and their priests and preachers and ethical culturists strike at Bimba in vengeance.”

1927

“Ruthenberg, Red Radical Leader, Dies: Cleveland Bookkeeper in Two Famous Trials Here for Communist and Anti-War Activities.” (Cleveland Plain Dealer). [March 3, 1927] Hatchet job obituary from the main Cleveland daily newspaper marking the sudden death of C.E. Ruthenberg at age 44. Ruthenberg is said to have died "shattered and disillusioned" -- "He did not live to see the revolution, so his life's work went for naught." The paper turns in a poetic bit of understatement when it notes that "Ruthenberg refused to keep still about the war" and is positively shocked to recall that "the President's signature was hardly dry on the declaration of hostilities before Ruthenberg was on a soapbox in Public Square denouncing the conflict as 'mass murder,'" blithely ignoring the fact that the conflict had begun nearly 3 years and 10 million corpses earlier. The better part of a decade after the event, the Plain Dealer reverses its biased coverage of the Cleveland May Day Riot of 1919 at last to report: "The mob swept in from the curbs, tore down the red flags, snatched red sashes from the women, and red neckties from the men. For a block the street was a grand free-for-all fist fight. Two men were killed and 200 injured. Instead of arresting those who had attacked the parade, the police arrested the marchers." Ruthenberg is characterized as a "bitter and humorless" stump speaker who was profoundly ineffective. His surviving widow and son are accorded a clean bill of health, apparently inaccurately, as "not communists." An impressively lengthy list of Ruthenberg's arrests is included.

“C.E. Ruthenberg,” by William Z. Foster [April 1927] On March 2, 1927, 44-year old General Secretary of the Workers (Communist) Party C.E. Ruthenberg succumbed to a bacterial infection suffered in the aftermath of an appendectomy, giving the America Communist movement a new icon for which to burn a candle. This eulogy was published by the chief factional rival of Ruthenberg in the party, William Z. Foster. Foster gives tribute to Ruthenberg as “one of the most often indicted and imprisoned workers in the American movement” and recalls their joint embroilment in the St. Joseph, Michigan trials of the spring of 1923 which followed the raid of the August 1922 Bridgman Convention of the underground CPA. Foster recalls: “Ruthenberg made his defense like a true proletarian fighter. He made no effort to evade the question or to seek refuge in legal trickery. He made a clean-cut defense of the left wing movement. From the witness stand, in which Ruthenberg put hours of the time of the trial, he outlined the position of the party, its attitude toward the questions of the day, its role in the labor movement, its aims and its methods. His thoughtful analysis was itself a challenge and a

warning to the capitalist court that while it was likely that he would be convicted, the historic movement which he represented at the trial could not possibly be imprisoned or defeated..."

"Ruthenberg, the Fighter: The Passing of an American Pioneer," by James P. Cannon [April 1927] Eulogy of the recently deceased leader of the Workers (Communist) Party C.E. Ruthenberg by a factional foe, published in the monthly magazine of International Labor Defense. Cannon recalls Ruthenberg's personal interest in the general movement for workers' legal defense and emphasizes his place as a founder of the ILD. He calls Ruthenberg "no fly-by-night dabbler" in the revolutionary movement, but rather a long-time and "consistent advocate of political action" who nevertheless "fought against the current of reformist corruption in the Socialist Party." Ruthenberg is characterized as a "tireless worker," a "party man," and a "soldier" for whom money meant nothing. Cannon lauds Ruthenberg for his "courage, devotion, and self-sacrifice" and asserts that "new generation of militants will be influenced by that tradition and will carefully safeguard it."

SEPTEMBER

"Questions and Answers to American Trade Unionists: Stalin's Interview with the First American Trade Union Delegation to Soviet Russia," by I. Stalin; Introduction by Jay Lovestone. [discussion of Sept. 9, 1927] Full text of a pamphlet published by the Communist Party, providing stenographic quotations of a very extensive dialog between Iosif Stalin and a number of American trade unionists and academics in the Soviet Union on a fact-finding tour. Stalin answers a dozen questions posed by the visiting delegates, sidestepping only a query about his concrete differences with Trotsky, before turning the tables and asking a series of questions of the Americans about conditions in their own country. One passage by Stalin the perceived role of the Comintern in the daily life of national parties is of particular interest: "The assertion that the American Communists work under 'orders from Moscow' is absolutely untrue. There are no such Communists in the world who would agree to work 'under orders' from outside against their own convictions and will and contrary to the requirements of the situation. Even if there were such Communists they would not be worth a cent. Communists bravely fight against a host of enemies. The value of a Communist, among other things, lies in that he is able to defend his convictions. Therefore, it is strange to speak of American Communists as not having their own convictions and capable only of working according to 'orders' from outside. The only part of the labor leaders' assertion that has any truth in it at all is that the American Communists are affiliated to an international Communist organization and from time to time consult with the Central body of this organization on one question or another.... Some people believe that the members of the Communist International in Moscow do nothing else but sit and write instructions to all countries. As there are more than 60 countries affiliated to the Comintern, one can imagine the position of the members of the Comintern who never sleep or eat, in fact do nothing but sit day and night and write instructions to all countries."

Comrade Stalin Exposes Social Democratic Forgery. (*Daily Worker*) [cable of Sept. 21, 1926] With C.E. Ruthenberg's demand for retraction ignored, General Secretary of the Russian

Communist Party (bolsheviks) I.V. Stalin takes time to respond to a report in the Socialist Party weekly *The New Leader* reporting of comments made severely critical of Comintern chief Grigorii Zinoviev. In his cable Stalin denounces *The New Leader* for having published “falsified concluding remarks.” Stalin insists in his communique to *The Daily Worker*: “I ask you to allow me to state through your paper that the reports of the ‘remarks of Stalin’ published in *The New Leader* of August 14, 1926, has absolutely nothing in common with my speech at the plenum of the CC either in contents or in form or in tone, and that this report is thus a most complete and ignorant forgery.”

The Socialist Party Furnishes Its “Insurgents,” by Bertram D. Wolfe [Sept. 23, 1926]

Communist functionary Bert Wolfe takes a look at factionalism and “disintegration going on inside the Socialist Party” in this *Daily Worker* article. He sees the rightward-tilting *Jewish Daily Forward* as playing the decisive role in the dwindling Socialist organization, with that paper now having abandoned its opposition to Zionism and making an active play for the support of the petty bourgeoisie and right wing union leaders employing “gangster tactics” against left wing locals in the garment industry. Norman Thomas and the Young People’s Socialist League have constituted a “vague and incoherent opposition” to the worst abuses of the ruling faction, Wolfe indicates, with Thomas being retaliated against by being “dumped” into an obscure candidacy and given one column in an otherwise hostile *New Leader* to “keep him quiet.” Wolfe’s interpretation of the factional situation which would erupt in the SPA over the next decade is prescient: “*The Forward’s* crowd is determined to run things with an iron hand and it is questionable how long they will permit even the innocent protests of Norman Thomas and how long they will still find any place for him at all in the ballot for him and in their paper. The only reason they tolerate him at all is because they know that his mild protest acts as a break upon the idealistic elements among the YPSLs, who are disgusted with the *Forward’s* crowd and its tactics but do not know what to do about it and have not enough initiative to make their own fight and have to look to a man like Norman Thomas for such leadership as he can give.”

OCTOBER

Eastman Drops His Mask, by Max Bedacht [Oct. 20, 1926] Top Ruthenberg factional lieutenant Max Bedacht takes up the Comintern’s cudgel against supporters of the opposition in the Russian Communist Party headed by Grigorii Zinoviev and Leon Trotsky. The target here is former *Liberator* magazine editor Max Eastman, who had the temerity to publish a factionally-driven work on contemporary Soviet history entitled *Since Lenin Died*. Eastman is besmirched by Bedacht as “either a forger or a spy” for having “either made up his “documents” out of whole cloth — or he obtained them under false pretenses of friendship to make money out of them by selling them to the enemy.” Rather than addressing the documents’ content, Bedacht goes after the messenger, declaring “We doubt their genuineness, because we know Eastman.” Pressured statements by N.K. Krupskaya and Trotsky undermining Eastman’s legitimacy are quoted approvingly by Bedacht. Fortunately Eastman’s mercenary “mental excrements on the Russian Communist Party” have been ignored, Bedacht notes, since that organization had already “overwhelmingly repudiated Trotsky and Zinoviev.” He

continues: "In the exercise of their inner party democracy, the workers organized in the Russian party have declared in overwhelming numbers that they stand with the Central Committee of their party."

NOVEMBER

Eugene V. Debs and the Revolutionary Labor Movement, by C.E. Ruthenberg [Nov. 6, 1926] General Secretary of the Workers (Communist) Party C.E. Ruthenberg answers Socialist critics who charge the Communists with misrepresentation and bad faith for conducting memorial meetings in honor of the recently-deceased SPA National Chairman Gene Debs. While acknowledging Debs' place outside the Communist Party, Ruthenberg pointedly remarks that "the Socialists do not care to be reminded of the many times that Eugene V. Debs disagreed with the reformist and reactionary position taken by the Socialist Party. They wish to make the tradition of Debs' work in the revolutionary labor movement part of the background of the utterly bankrupt Socialist Party and hide it with the mantle of non-class struggle reformism, which is the policy of the Socialist Party today." Ruthenberg then illustrates his point with a series of historical anecdotes from 1910, 1912, 1917, and 1919, in which Debs openly and loudly espoused left wing positions on questions of internal party controversy. Ruthenberg also cites his membership in the Communist-sponsored Labor Defense Council and International Labor Defense as well as the Trade Union Educational League. "Although Debs did not clearly grasp the principles underlying the class struggle and their implications, he was a revolutionary fighter who instinctively took his stand on the side of the worker in every battle," Ruthenberg writes. "In every great struggle in American labor history Debs spoke out his flaming words in support of the workers."

"Expulsion of Trotsky and Zinoviev: Statement of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers (Communist) Party of America." [Nov. 20, 1927] Two words that absolutely do not exist in the literature of American Communism for the 1919-1923 period are "Leninism" and "Trotskyism." Both of these terms are ideological constructs which emerged as a byproduct of the faction fight that erupted after the death of Lenin in January 1924, when a number of leading politicians in the Russian Communist Party (Zinoviev, Stalin, Kamenev, Trotsky) attempted to systematize Lenin's basic ideas as an "-ism," to portray themselves as the best and most consistent adherents of this new "-ism," and to anathematize their leading opponents as antithetical to this "-ism." That said, this document is interesting as an example of how quickly the Jay Lovestone-led Workers (Communist) Party of America issued a public statement approving the expulsion from the Russian Communist Party of Lev Trotsky and Grigorii Zinoviev following the debacle of their Revolution Day public demonstration against the Central Committee of the VKP(b), headed by Iosif Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin. "The Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition has long ago overstepped the bounds of the permissible in a Communist, Leninist Party. The actions of the opposition have long ago reached the point of actually encouraging the enemies of the working class. Now the opposition has come to the stage where it is organizing a new party, joining hands with non-working class elements, enemies of the Soviet Union, becoming the rallying center for capitalist opposition to the Soviet power generally," the resolution declares. The resolution adds that "Trotskyism is not Leninism. It is the negation of the Leninist revolutionary theory and practice, which alone guided the toiling masses of Russia to success and victory." Trotskyism is characterized by the CEC resolution

as “ultra-revolutionary phrases masking petty bourgeois opportunist tendencies.” The resolution proclaims that “the Central Executive Committee of the Workers (Communist) Party pledges itself to increase its efforts to educate its membership and the American working class as to the line of Leninism and the issues involved in the controversy in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.” Without a bit of irony the ultra-factional American CEC adds: “Hail the unity of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist International, leader of the world’s working class. Long live Leninism, the path to victory!”

DECEMBER

“Stalin, ‘The Voice of the Party,’ Breaks Trotsky: The Rubberstamp Secretary vs. The Fiery Idealist: Sidelights on the Russian Revolution,” by Anna Louise Strong [circa Dec. 15, 1925] In this article from the English Left Wing press, American Communist Anna Louise Strong explains the political situation evolving in the Russian Communist Party. Whereas previous to the death of the former, Lenin and Trotsky had dominated the Russian scene, now it was Trotsky and Stalin who loomed large. And of these two: “Stalin is undisputed ‘boss’ today. He rules through his commanding position as General Secretary of the dominant party, and from that post influences the appointment chairmen of the Council of People’s Commissars and the heads of politics and industry. He sees practically no foreigners and none of the high non-Communist administrative officers of Government: his work is to keep the party machine organized and efficiently functioning.” The Opposition around Trotsky is characterized as “small but able,” composed largely of “the men who were abroad in Europe during the Tsarist days of persecution -- they learned Western languages, Western industrial technique, Western revolutionary movements.” Strong adds that these “They comprise all the good orators of the Communist Party. Meetings have become dull since the Opposition was suppressed.” Strong intriguingly observes that “Trotsky is a personality: he inspires millions. Stalin is only a perfect Secretary. Yet Stalin wins and Trotsky loses. Trotsky loses because his personality is always in evidence; Stalin wins because he succeeds in making himself forgotten. He is thought of not as a man but as the ‘Voice of the Party.’ Personal allegiances are at a discount among the Communists. Aside from their reverence for Lenin, who is no longer a man but a symbol, they wish to follow, not any individual, but the collective will of the organization. Stalin succeeds by becoming identified with that collective will. A man who can do that is, of course, a great politician.”

1928

“John Reed and the Real Thing,” by Michael Gold [Nov. 1927] This article came from the issue of the Communist Party’s artistic and literary monthly commemorating the 10th Anniversary of the Russian Revolution—a tribute by Mike Gold to his friend Jack Reed. The article is written against the views of Walter Lippmann and other “pale, rootless intellectuals” who smugly claimed that Jack Reed was a romantic, a playboy, and a superficial adventurer. Gold replies “The Revolution is the romance of tens of millions of men and women in the world today. This is something many American intellectuals never understand about Jack Reed. If he had remained romantic about the underworld, or about meaningless adventure-wandering, or

about women or poem-making, they would have continued admiring him. But Jack Reed fell in love with the Revolution, and gave it all his generous heart's blood." Gold further sees Reed as pivotal in destroying the historic prejudice against intellectuals held by the American far left, noting that for the IWW "the word 'intellectual' became a synonym for the word 'bastard,' and in the American Communist movement there is some of this feeling." However Reed "identified himself so completely with the working class; he undertook every danger for the revolution; he forgot his Harvard education, his genius, his popularity, his gifted body and mind so completely that no one else remembered them any more," thus proving for all time that the line between intellectuals and workers was not impassable. Gold concludes that the "war to end wars" supported by Lippmann and his associates—those who denigrate Reed and the Russian Revolution—was false, a mere "prelude to a more rapacious capitalist imperialism and a greater imperialist war," but that John Reed had given his life for the "real thing."

"Ruthenberg Dead! Farewell Comrade Ruthenberg; Farewell Our Leader,," by Jay Lovestone [March 15, 1927] An exercise in hagiography and succession politics by the chief lieutenant of recently deceased Workers (Communist) Party leader C.E. Ruthenberg. "The entire American working class has suffered the greatest loss in its history," Lovestone breathlessly asserts. Lovestone credits his "closest guide, leader, and friend" Ruthenberg with being the first person in the (four decade long) American revolutionary socialist movement "to realize the value of organization." Ignoring the two men convicted with him (Wagenknecht, Baker) as well as scores of other Wobblies, Socialists, and anarchists arrested more or less simultaneously, Lovestone credits Ruthenberg as the "first one" in America imprisoned "for inspiring and organizing masses of workers to resist the drive of our imperialists to throw the American working class into the death orgy of the great war." Ruthenberg, not Louis Fraina, is credited with being the motivator of the left wing movement that split the Socialist Party in 1919. It is Ruthenberg, not Alexander Stoklitsky of the Russian Socialist Federation, whom Lovestone calls the "leader of the forward step" of forming a Communist Party of America. It was Ruthenberg, not William Z. Foster, who issued a slogan which "aroused and inspired the thousands of steel workers of Gary to the most valiant resistance displayed in the whole strike," in Lovestone's estimation. And so on, and so forth. There are certain obvious parallels here between Lovestone's shameless and slightly unhinged paean to the factionally-driven competition between party leaders in Soviet Russia to canonize Lenin following his sudden death in January 1924.

"Ruthenberg is Dead: Statement of the Political Committee of the W(C)PA." [March 3, 1927] &8212; On March 2, 1927, 44-year old General Secretary of the Workers (Communist) Party of America C.E. Ruthenberg succumbed following emergency surgery for acute appendicitis which developed into peritonitis. The sudden loss of the top party leader ushered in a battle for control of the party apparatus which was ultimately won by Jay Lovestone, a factional associate of Ruthenberg. This rather hagiographic obituary from the front page of The Daily Worker salutes the fallen leader of the party. Ruthenberg is lauded as the chief author on the Socialist Party of America&8217;s militant anti-war program adopted in 1917 and as the primary leader of the Left Wing movement which ultimately led to the splitting of the Socialist Party in 1919. A melodramatic and altogether too handy set of last words are attributed to Ruthenberg in this piece, with the Cleveland-born leader said to have declared: "TELL THE COMRADES TO CLOSE THEIR RANKS, TO BUILD THE PARTY. THE AMERICAN

WORKING CLASS, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF OUR PARTY AND THE COMINTERN, WILL WIN. LET'S FIGHT ON!"

1928

"Ruthenberg as Fighter and Leader," by Jay Lovestone. This hagiographic biography of the deceased Executive Secretary of the Workers (Communist) Party of America was originally written by his successor to introduce a collection of speeches published by International Publishers. Although thoroughly uncritical, this article nevertheless provides a useful summary of the political career of Ruthenberg, including an impressive list of political offices for which he was a candidate during the period 1910 to 1919 (Mayor, State Treasurer, Congressman, US Senator). Nary a word is mentioned about Ruthenberg's social origins, education, factional orientations over time, nor any hint given of any tactical difficulties faced or political errors made by Ruthenberg over the course of his political career. Instead, Ruthenberg, rendered a faultless icon, is depicted as "The Founder of the Communist Party" and lauded for "Leninist faith in the masses" dating back to 1911.

"Socialists in Washington Only Opposition: Progressive and Communist Organizations Disappear in Northwestern State," by Emil Herman [March 24, 1928] Short update in the situation on the ground in Washington state by the Socialist Party's state organizer there. Herman trumpets the growing dominance of the Socialist Party with the fading of the substantial Washington Progressive Farmers and Farmer-Labor Party from the Washington scene. He also details the end of the *Seattle Union Record*, only labor daily newspaper west of the Mississippi River until its recent demise. Operated for seven years through the largesse of local trade unions, the paper had lost its funding and been effectively dominated by the Communist Party following its obtaining of funds from that channel. A recent effort to restore the paper to its previous political line had failed owing to the lingering odor of the "communist wreckers" who had taken over the publication previously and newspaper was now in the possession of receivers, Herman notes.

"Ten Years," by C.M. O'Brien [May 1928] Ten year historical review of the Proletarian Party of America by Canadian-born activist Charlie O'Brien. Ignoring the fact that all factions of the Socialist Party supported the October Revolution, O'Brien asserts that *The Proletarian* was "the first paper to make its appearance within the Socialist Party, representing a group which was aiming to win the rank and file to the support of the Bolshevik Revolution." He criticizes the hastiness of Louis Fraina's *Revolutionary Age* and its obsession with "Mass Action" and belief in the imminence of American revolt instead of painstaking ideological preparation of the working class for revolution. The Left Wing National Conference in June 1919 is accused as having suffered from acute "infantile Leftism" and professing a "mish-mash of Anarchism, Socialism, and Syndicalism" an endemic "confusionism" which pushed the Michigan-based Proletarian group to establish a Communist Party of America in conjunction with Russian and other language groups which had found themselves out of the SPA. The expulsion of the Proletarian group from the CPA is said to have come two months after the party's formation, "without any warning or notice of any kind."

Government suppression had followed immediately, driving the CPA underground. The above-ground Proletarian group had continued their activity, forming the Proletarian Party of America in June 1920, O&8217;Brien notes.

“American Negro Problems,” by John Pepper. Full text of a pamphlet published by Workers Library Publishers in 1928. The Hungarian revolutionary Josef Pogany [“John Pepper”] outlines the situation facing the Communist Party with regards to black liberation: “The Communist Party cannot be a real Bolshevik Party without being also the Party of the liberation of the Negro race from all white oppression,” he notes. Pepper states that class differentiation has increased within the black population, with a black bourgeoisie emerging at the same time the situation of rural blacks was steadily worsening. The Communist Party would advance the cause of “full racial, social, and political equality for the Negro people,” dealing with the farming masses of the “Black Belt” as “the potential basis for a national liberation movement of the Negroes and as the basis for the realization of its right of self-determination of a Negro state.” Emphasis was to be placed on attracting black workers and agricultural laborers to membership in the Communist Party, says Pepper.

“Our Appeal Against Expulsion from the Communist Party,” by James P. Cannon. [Dec. 17, 1928] Text of a speech delivered Dec. 17, 1928 at a plenum of the Central Executive Committee of the Workers (Communist) Party. James Cannon, Max Shachtman, and Martin Abern were expelled from the party on Oct. 25, 1928 for “Trotskyism,” but chose to avail themselves of their right of appeal to the next meeting of the CEC. The nearly 200 in attendance heard a three hour presentation of the case against Cannon, Shachtman, and Abern, before Cannon was given the floor to present this hour-long defense. Cannon admitted the trio’s adherence to the “views of the Russian Opposition” but promised “to discontinue all extraordinary methods the moment our party rights are restored and we are permitted to defend our views in the party press and at party meetings.” Cannon charged that “the Pepper-Lovestone leadership” were embarked “on the course of bureaucratic disruption.” Cannon asserted a trend, particularly strong in the New York district, towards the dilution of the party with “all kinds of dubious, petty-bourgeois careerists and half-baked intellectual elements” “a trend directly related to the “wholesale expulsion of proletarian fighters,”

“Underground and Above: A Memoir of American Communism in the 1920s,” by Max Bedacht. A chapter from the unpublished memoir of Max Bedacht (1883-1972), completed in 1967 from the manuscript at the Tamiment Library at New York University—published here through their courtesy and with our thanks. Bedacht’s account details the factional struggle that swept the party from the unification of the UCP with the old CPA in 1921 through the expulsion of Jay Lovestone and his associates in 1929. Particularly valuable for its confirmation that the ill-fated Bridgman, Michigan convention of 1922 was held at the same exact site as the problem-free Joint Unity Convention that founded the United Communist Party in 1920—and for recollections about the factional struggle that took place at the 4th Congress of the Comintern in Nov.-Dec. 1922, in which Bedacht carried the banner of the “Liquidator” faction in opposition to the adherents of the underground party, the “Geese.” Includes copious explanatory footnotes.

1929

NOVEMBER

“Lovestone, Wolfe & Co. Stand Naked in the Marketplace: Unsigned Editorial in The Daily Worker, Nov. 30, 1929.” by A heated and rather nasty front page editorial from the pages of the CPUSA’s daily. Bukharin’s capitulation and admission of having made “dangerous errors” in the USSR “has left the latest recruits to the ranks of the enemies of the working class and of the Communist Party of the United States—Lovestone, Wolfe & Co.—stark naked with their renegade sores exposed in the marketplace where capitalism purchases its servants,” the Editorial declares. The “counterrevolutionary hope” of a split in the CPSU around Bukharin is said to have “gone glimmering. That the actions of Comrade Bukharin, with the opportunist, pessimist platform upon which he then stood, could bring a split in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union was never more than a desperate wish on the part of the enemies of Communism and the working class who found temporary refuge in the ranks of our world Party.” The editorial quotes Lovestone’s charges that the present leaders of the Comintern were “political ignoramuses” marked by “unprincipledness” and responds in kind with specific charges: “Lovestone speaking of ‘unprincipledness!’ This is surely a sight for gods and men! The young gentleman who began his career as a police probation officer, who, true to his training in this broad field of anti-working class activity, added fresh laurels by appearing as a state’s witness against a comrade in 1920, who found his way into our Party by methods best known to himself but of which others are not entirely ignorant—the petty bourgeois careerist who systematically corrupted the younger and weaker elements of our Party and who only 8 months ago called Salome-like for the head of Bukharin in the vain belief that he could thereby save his own.” Lovestone and his political associates Bert Wolfe and Ben Gitlow are called “petty bourgeois gentlemen” and “counterrevolutionists.” “Fortunately for the American working class our Party was strong enough to expose and drive these treacherous elements from its ranks,” the editorial trumpets.

DECEMBER

“Our Party and the New Dues System,” by Beatrice Suskind [Dec. 7, 1929] &212; There has been substantial comment in the literature about the revolving door of incoming and outgoing members into the American Communist Party, a phenomenon recognized even by the contemporary participants themselves. Little has been done to actually examine the underlying sources of this membership churn, however. This *Daily Worker* article details the “New Dues System” implemented in the fall of 1929 by the CPUSA in an attempt to rationalize a bewildering and energy draining array of special fundraising activities which had turned party units into what Suskind calls “mechanical money raising units.” Special assessments for the party press, southern organizing, auxiliary organizations, local operations, and special events ran to perhaps \$2.50 per week, according to Suskind&217;s tally. Instead, under the “New Dues System,” those earning \$40 per week would be responsible for dues of 75 cents per

week only. (The actual rate set under the new system was 2% of weekly wages). The regularization of dues collections would alienate fewer new and “ideologically weak” members and would build stronger and more effective primary party units, Suskind argues.

“Lovestone Ends His ‘Isolation,’” by Earl Browder [Dec. 23. 1929] Article from the Communist Party’s daily press attempting to denigrate expelled party leader Jay Lovestone as a participant in an international alliance of Right Wing elements. Browder makes much of a \$100 donation received by Lovestone from “Mexican comrades” as “blood-money” from “a choice collection of scoundrels” and renegades who were ultimately “supported and financed by Wall Street.” All this serves as precursor to the main event, Browder’s dusting off of the 1920 Winitsky Trial affair, in which Lovestone testified under subpoena from the prosecution, only to be accused of party treason. Browder asserts that Lovestone “received immunity from prosecution by agreeing to testify; his testimony was referred to by the judge in charging the jury as the basis for a verdict of guilt against Winitsky. About that time there were several splits in the underground party, and in the confusion Lovestone escaped from having to answer to the Party for his conduct.” Browder notes that the affair was, years later, brought before the International Control Committee of the Comintern, which “after reviewing the case, declared that Lovestone had been guilty of conduct impermissible in a Communist”—but which closed the case without sanctions, in light of so much time having passed and Lovestone having been accepted into the top leadership. “Under normal circumstances the case would have been closed even now. But Lovestone has shown by his present renegacy, by his slanderous attacks upon the Party and Comintern, and by his open collaboration with the enemies of the revolutionary working class, that his testimony for the state in 1920 was not an accident,” Browder states.

1930

JANUARY

“The New Dues System,” by I. Amter [Jan. 10, 1930] CPUSA Central Committee member Israel Amter takes up the party’s controversial new dues system in an effort to deter criticism. Amter acknowledges that the new tiered and income-based weekly dues system represented a hike for all members but emphasizes that the party as the general staff of the class struggle is entitled to total commitment of the party’s members and their obligation to support the organization through increased regular dues (as opposed to being placed in the position of begging for voluntary contributions on the basis of special appeals). Amter notes that other European political parties require dues of 2% or 3% of their members income, a rate commensurate with the new dues system which is outlined in this piece. Amter makes an appeal for emulation of the attitude expressed by “the best of the Wobblies” towards the Industrial Workers of the World: “A Wobbly is completely devoted to the IWW; what he has belongs to the organization...” Amter maintains that newcomers to the Communist Party do not care about the dues rate, but rather about the party’s program

and activity, and dismisses detractors of the system as those wishing to return to the old language federation-based system of organization. He proclaims the new dues system a “revolutionary act” of the CPUSA’s leadership.

FEBRUARY

“The Facts Speak for Themselves,” by Harry Winitsky [Feb. 15, 1930] The charges made by the CPUSA that recently expelled leader Jay Lovestone had acted improperly as a state’s witness in the Harry Winitsky trial of 1920 are refuted in this article by Winitsky himself, published in the pages of *The Revolutionary Age*, official organ of the “CPUSA-Majority Group.” Winitsky states that while at the time of the trial he had believed that Lovestone should have refused to testify under compulsion and instead should have chosen to go to jail for contempt of court, instead “Lovestone as a disciplined member of the Party accepted the instructions of Ruthenberg, then the Secretary of the Party, and testified.” Winitsky takes aim at Earl Browder’s editorial of Dec. 23, 1929, against Lovestone and declares “Browder in his article lies when he states that Lovestone agreed to testify against me when he was offered immunity from prosecution.” Browder’s further statement that Lovestone’s testimony “was referred to by the judge in charging the jury as the basis for a verdict of guilty against Winitsky” is called by Winitsky “a deliberate lie, a contemptible trick used by Browder to cover the truth.” In reality, Winitsky states that “I had no illusions as to my fate when I went to trial” and that Lovestone had merely regurgitated facts already in evidence in the proceeding. “I frankly told the Communist International in my statement of the case that I was convicted by the court even before my trial had started and that Lovestone’s testimony had nothing to do with my conviction,” Winitsky states. Winitsky proceeds to tell the sordid tale of the ongoing effort of the Foster-Cannon-Bittelman-Lore faction to dust off the 1920 trial for factional gain, as part of an effort to discredit the man believed to be the “brains” of the opposing Ruthenberg faction. Winitsky was induced against his better judgment to prefer charges against Lovestone to the Communist International—an action for which he was ashamed and subsequently apologized to Lovestone. Winitsky’s account of this effort to make hay of the trial offers a fascinating glimpse of the bitter and utterly unprincipled factional warfare of the middle-1920s.

APRIL

“Resolution on Language Work: Adopted by the March 31-April 4, 1930, Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPUSA.” At the end of March, the Central Committee of the CPUSA gathered in New York to prepare a “Thesis on the Economic and Political Situation and the Tasks of the Party” and to draft resolutions for the forthcoming 7th Convention of the Party, which opened June 20. This document is one of the seven resolutions adopted, outlining (in rather stilted language) the failings of various language fractions and the non-english party press and detailing the organizational-command structure within non-party language groups. An interesting detailing of the party’s foreign language work during a period when “federationism” was regarded as retrograde.

“As Pure and Transparent as Crystal,” by Leon Trotsky [April 26, 1930] Trotsky’s

speculative commentary, first published in the April 26, 1930 issue of *The Militant*, the organ of the Communist League (Opposition), on Stalin's decision to publish his "Speeches on the American Communist Party" in the VKP(b) theoretical journal *Bolshevik* and as a pamphlet in America with a print run of 100,000. Trotsky sees Stalin as attempting to undercut William Z. Foster's claim to the leadership of the American party with these publications.

JUNE

"Shortcomings of Party Fractions in Language Work." [June 1930] Official published statement on the activities of the non-English members of the Communist Party, USA. Even at this late date somewhat more than half of the party's membership seems to have been participants in one of the CPUSA's 16 "Language Bureaus." The largest of these remained the Finnish, accounting for a reported 1800 members— more than double the membership of the next largest Language Bureau, the Yiddish-language Jewish Bureau. This article in *The Party Builder* is critical of the members of the various Language Bureaus for joining small auxiliary organizations already controlled by the Party rather than by attempting to expand the party's power through participation in larger organizations controlled by "the class enemy." The leadership of the language groups are singled out for criticism for their "looseness," unable in some cases to provide exact numbers of party members participating in outside language groups. A frequent failure of the language group members to participate in general party campaigns is also noted. The "main decisive work" of these members is in the regular party units, readers are reminded.

"Right Danger and Radicalization," by Alfred Wagenknecht [June 21, 1930] Formerly the Executive Secretary of the Communist Labor Party and United Communist Party and the head of the Friends of Soviet Russia, by 1930 Alfred Wagenknecht had been largely shunted aside from a position of top leadership in the Communist Party. This article from the *Daily Worker* is written from the perspective of a rank-and-filer and discusses the party's all-out propaganda campaign among its members against the so-called "Right Danger" in Wagenknecht's own party group. Wagenknecht seems positively inclined to the CPUSA's left turn: "The Party suffers from indigestion because Party members are not at factory gates," he declares. Wagenknecht advocates for greater direct contact with the working class: "We must drill comrades in how to do factory-gate work. We must teach them to make slogan speeches. We must insist that they talk to the workers and get contacts. We must develop revolutionary imagination, spirit; form experienced shock troops for the larger factories; concentrate adequate comrades until results are obtained; study the factory and the workers so as to circumvent obstacles and difficulties with the police and bosses; know exactly when the workers go to work, come from work, have their lunch period; find out all about working conditions in the factory, number of departments, how to get leaflets and Daily Workers inside the shop."

1931

UNDETERMINED MONTH

“Stalin’s Speeches on the American Communist Party,” by I. Stalin. Full text of a pamphlet published by the CPUSA early in 1931, containing three of Stalin’s speeches on the American factional situation, delivered before the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Stalin is harshly critical of the lack of discipline and unprincipled factionalism of both of the Lovestone majority faction and the Foster-Bittelman minority faction. CPUSA Executive Secretary Jay Lovestone drew particularly heavy fire, with Stalin noting that “In factional scandalmongering, in factional intrigue, Comrade Lovestone is indisputably an adroit and talented factional wirepuller. No one can deny him that. But factional leadership must not be confused with Party leadership. A Party leader is one thing, a factional leader is something quite different. Not every factional leader has the gift of being a Party leader. I doubt very much that at this stage Comrade Lovestone can be a Party leader.” As part of Stalin’s proposed solution, Lovestone and Bittelman were to be held in Moscow and reassigned to Comintern work elsewhere—a decision which precipitated the split of Lovestone and his closest circle. Includes an unsigned preface emphasizing Stalin’s correctness and dismissing allegations made by the Left Opposition movement that publication of the document marked a first step towards Foster’s removal from the ranks of party leaders.

MARCH

“Revive Bridgman Case, Try to Jail Communist Workers.” (Daily Worker) [March 26, 1931] In March of 1931, the all-but-forgotten 1922 Bridgman raid was suddenly vaulted back into the news, the long-delayed case apparently seen by the American state security apparatus as a means of decapitating the troublesome Communist Party USA. Some 27 indicted “conspirators” remained in jeopardy for their purported crime—accused of having met with their fellows at a summer camp on the shores of Lake Michigan as part of a convention of the underground Communist Party of America. Those imperiled by possible 10 year prison terms for this alleged violation of the Michigan Criminal Syndicalism law included William Z. Foster, Earl Browder, Max Bedacht, William F. Dunne, Ella Reeves Bloor, Robert Minor, and Rose Pastor Stokes. To make matters worse for the indicted Communists, the judge in the case reversed the ruling he made in 1923 and combined the cases of the entire group, making it easy for a single mass political trial to be conducted. The CP’s legal aid arm, the International Labor Defense, called upon American workers to “immediately rally in militant fashion to save these leaders from a long term in prison.... Organize defense meetings, mass demonstrations, and fight for the immediate freeing of our militant membership.”

“After 8 Years, the Michigan Cases Come to Life Again Through Ham Fish’s Attacks: Capitalists Insist on Trial of Foster, Browder, Bedacht, Minor, Weinstone, and Others.”(Daily Worker) [March 31, 1931] This article provides additional information about the miraculously revitalized case revolving around the 1922 raid of the Communist Party of America’s convention at Bridgman, Michigan. The decision to reopen the case is said to be related to the assumption of office by a new Michigan Attorney General on Jan. 1, 1933, an individual characterized as “evidently eager to share the national laurels for red-baiting with Hamilton Fish.” Hearings before Judge White in Berrien Co. were said to have been unsuccessful, the prosecution being “ably and energetically” assisted by the judge in hearings

held March 26. As a result, the cases of the 27 indicted party members were combined into a single trial. "The Assistant Attorney General sat through the proceedings without opening his mouth. The judge pleaded his case. The motion of the prosecution wasn't even read. The judge granted it without hearing it. It was directed against the accused and that was sufficient ground for granting it. All the rights Judge White condescended to grant to the accused was that, if they didn't like this ruling, they can go to the Supreme Court and try to have it reversed," the article states. A trial date of June 1, 1931 was set.

MAY

"The First Convention of the International Workers' Order, Inc." by R. Saltzman [May 30, 1931] One of the Communist Party's most successful affiliated "mass organizations" was the International Workers' Order, formed by the separation of Left Wing branches from the Workmen's Circle, a Jewish fraternal and benefit society with a Socialist orientation. This pre-convention report by IWO head R. Saltzman gives a brief outline of the IWO's origins and activity during its first 11 months between its effective launch on July 1, 1930 and the end of May 1931. Saltzman notes that some 225 branches of the IWO in 31 states had been organized, with 12,000 members—slightly short of the target of 15,000 set for the year. Over \$22,700 in sick benefits had been paid out by the organization during this period, with \$51,600 remaining in reserve. In addition to sick benefits, the IWO had taken over the formation of childrens' schools from the Non-Partisan Workers' Childrens' Schools organization, leading to the establishment of 80 schools giving "a working class revolutionary education" to some 6,000 children. Further, the IWO had "actively taken part in the mass struggles," including endorsement of a national health insurance bill, participation in May Day rallies, and participation in the election campaign "lead by the Communist Party." "The first convention of the International Workers' Order will accept the general correct line, in the light of constructive self-criticism, abolish the drawbacks in our work, reveal the weak points, and strengthen our position for a united Class Order in the fraternal movement in this country," Saltzman declares.

JUNE/h3> *The Program of Class Struggle Co-operation: And the Platform of the Class Struggle for the Co-op Central Exchange.* [June 1931] Full issue of a rare pamphlet published by the Workers and Farmers Cooperative Unity Alliance, the Communist Party-associated entity which in the name of-o; Left Wing Cooperators" sought to take over the Cooperative Central Exchange run by radical Finnish-Americans in the Upper Midwest. The pamphlet, produced by the Työmies Society in Superior, Wisconsin, asserts that despite the fact that the Communist-o; Left Wing membership" represented a majority of members of the Cooperative Central Exchange, the leadership headed by former Communist George Halonen used expulsions and manipulation of stockholders to gain a-o; mechanical majority" at the April 1931 Annual Convention of the Central Exchange. Despite the defeat of their program, the Communists continued to advance their program-o; against Halonen and other betrayers of the interests of the workers and poor farmers." The Communists charge Halonen with leadership of a-o; secret apparatus" of-o; renegades from the class struggle" who had circulated a book called *Political Bankruptcy of the Comintern* and aligned the Cooperative Central Exchange with the mainstream Cooperative League of the USA and the-o; International Social Fascist

leadership.” The pamphlet asserts that the Halonen leadership had used legal action in capitalist courts to force dissident cooperatives into bankruptcy. In addition, counter-organizations of Finnish women and young people had been established by the Cooperative Central Exchange in opposition to equivalent Communist-controlled groups, the pamphlet observes. It declares these policies to be—o; not only social fascism, it must lead deeper and deeper into open fascism to which the organization is sinking.” Includes the full 14 plank—o; Left Wing” cooperative program and a June 4, 1931 statement by the Executive Board of the Workers’ and Farmers’ Cooperative Unity Alliance protesting the actions of the Halonen leadership as exponents of a—o; systemic resistance in alliance with the Farmer-Labor Party, the IWW, the AF of L, the Lovestones, the Trotskyits, Alannes, Sulkanens, the social democratic *Raivaaja*, the *Industrialisti*, and other white guard newspapers” in opposition to the Trade Union Unity League and the United Farmers’ League.

1932

UN-DATED

(Proposed Draft) Program: Fighting Methods and Organization Forms of the Unemployed Councils: A Manual for Hunger Fighters. [1932] Full text of an ultra-rare mimeographed pamphlet by the National Committee of the Unemployed Councils of the USA, not listed in WorldCat. The document details the program and structure of the Unemployed Councils, a mass organization launched and controlled by the Communist Party USA. The Unemployed Councils were not to be a dues based membership organization, but rather were to be open to all workers accepting the group’s program, without regard to race, gender, political affiliation, or employment status. No mention is made of organization on the basis of language groups. Funds were to come from the sale of “Registered Supporter” cards, costing 5 cents for 3 months, plus voluntary weekly or monthly donations receipted with “Fighting Fund Stamps.” Social events, picnics, lectures, and other occasional fundraisers were to help supplant this income stream. The primary unit of the organization was to be the “Unemployed Committee” consisting of 3 to 15 members, generally elected on the basis of geography rather than shop or industry. These Unemployed Committees in turn elected from 1 to 3 of their members to delegated bodies called Unemployed Councils. These Unemployed Councils in turn were to elect representatives to a City Council in metropolitan areas with a sufficient number of these groups. Committees and Councils were instructed to form 8 member “Self Defense Groups” which would “operate in an organized manner to defend headquarters, meetings, demonstrations, and delegations against violent attacks by hoodlums and police.” The radical “immediate demands” of the committees seems to have been generated on the initiative of their local membership; the delegated councils seem to have had more centralized direction, “[guiding] the movement in line with the general program and aims.”

OCTOBER

“Letter from Tom Mooney in San Quentin Prison to Joseph Stalin in Moscow, Oct. 17, 1932.” “This letter was promoted on the cover of the November 1932 issue of The Labor Defender, the official organ of the CP’s legal defense organization, International Labor Defense. While the greetings to Stalin on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia are largely pro forma, the document is interesting both as a snapshot of Mooney’s

personal politics (“All Hail to the Russian Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat. I’m for it hook, line and sinker, without equivocation or reservation.”) as well as to the way that a Cult of Personality was beginning to emerge among the Communist faithful even at this early date (the person of Stalin beginning to be regarded as a human embodiment of the Russia revolution). Mooney expresses his belief that had it not been for the demonstration on his behalf of Petrograd workers on April 25, 1917, he would have been executed.

1933

OCTOBER

“Manifesto and Program of the American League Against War and Fascism.: Adopted at the First U.S. Congress Against War, New York City, Sept. 29-Oct. 1, 1933.” Founding declaration for the Communist Party’s 1930s mass organization dedicated to anti-militarism and defense of the USSR. In the face of increasing war danger and the development of fascism abroad and fascist tendencies at home, the American League Against War and Fascism advocated “mass resistance” uniting workers, impoverished farmers, oppressed blacks, women, and youth in a “nationwide agitation and organization against war preparations and war.” The group pledged to “support the peace policies of the Soviet Union for total and universal disarmament” and to oppose the machinations of imperialism abroad as well as “developments leading to Fascism” at home.

1933

JUNE

“C.P. Proposes Joint Actions on Daily Issues: Statement of the Central Committee, CPUSA to the National Executive Committee, Socialist Party, June 19, 1934,” In the aftermath of Hitler’s attainment of power in Germany and in mortal fear of the perceived “fascist” tendencies of the new Roosevelt administration, the Communist Party made an appeal for a “United Front of Action” with the Socialist Party, delivered as a letter to the SP’s 1934 National Convention in Detroit. This communique was not answered, motivating the CP to make the concrete pitch more publicly—publishing the text in the June 26 edition of the *Daily Worker*. Noting that the majority of the newly-elected NEC of the Socialist Party had previously announced themselves in favor of united front action with the Communists but had been blocked by “Hillquit, Oneal, Waldman & Co.,” the SP leadership was directly challenged: “Today, the National Executive Committee, which claims that its policies represent a repudiation of that group, and which poses as a leftward group, can no longer offer the old excuse for an inability to establish the united front with the Communist Party on issues which concern the most immediate and vital interests of all the toilers.”

1933

OCTOBER

“Beginnings of Revolutionary Political Action in the USA,” by Vern Smith [Oct. 1933] A pamphlet-length historical survey of the development of the American radical movement from 19th Century utopianism to the formation of the Socialist Party of America, as published in the pages of the theoretical journal of the CPUSA. While tendentious treatments of controversial topics do creep into the work, as might be expected, the article remains useful as a brief summary of the main course of left wing political development throughout the last part of the 19th Century and first part of the 20th. Smith emphasizes the continuity between the American sections of the First International and the formation of the Socialist Labor Party, from which sprang the Socialist Party of America; from which in turn sprang the American Communist movement. Of particular interest is the rather heroic portrayal of the Chicago Anarchist movement of the 1880s—depicted as fundamentally sound revolutionists who were pushed into the position of becoming “more and more extreme in the course of their reaction against the sickening legalism of the SLP.” Also interesting is the accusation that the Socialist Labor Party took a position of national chauvinism during the Spanish-American War of 1898, ignoring the transparently obvious imperialist basis of the conflict and explicitly regurgitating the official slogan that this was a war to “Free the oppressed Cubans!”

1936

JANUARY

Illinois Needs a Farmer Labor Party, by Morris H. Childs [circa January 1936] (graphic pdf, large file: 2.4 megs) Complete pamphlet on the 1936 effort to establish a Farmer-Labor Party, authored by Chicago District Organizer Morris Childs — later to become the highest ranking FBI mole in the leadership of the Communist Party USA (Operation SOLO). Childs first dallies with international matters, hailing party leader Earl Browder and the popular front line of the 7th World Congress of the Comintern and calling for defense of the Soviet Union as a “fortress against Fascism” and the “firmest bulwark against peace.” Only after 10 pages does Childs get around to the ostensible subject of the pamphlet, the November 1936 elections. Childs depicts this as a struggle between an emerging “reactionary group with strong Fascist tendencies,” including the Liberty League, the Economy League, and William Randolph Hearst. President Franklin Roosevelt is depicted as “fundamentally” seeking “to carry through the same ruling class program as is wanted by his opponents from the right.” Nevertheless, Roosevelt has managed to mobilize the working class, farmers, and the middle class in support of his agenda, while his opponents of the “reactionary capitalist groups” have marshaled the very wealthy and large capitalists. Citing Earl Browder, Childs notes the centrality of the task of “winning the masses away from Roosevelt” as well as combating a potential turn of some of these elements to the Republicans. With respect to Illinois, Childs highlights a regressive state sales tax, failure to enact social legislation, and the use of the national guard and state police to break strikes by the Democratic administration. Childs notes growing disaffection with the policies of the New Deal and calls for a new Farmer-Labor Party as a vehicle to harness these turbulent elements and to keep them from falling into the clutches of the Chamber of Commerce, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the Liberty League. “Every opportunity must be used to rally the oppressed and exploited sections of the population for the building of a Farmer-Labor Party movement,” Childs declares. Childs acknowledges that calls for such a movement are limited to certain unions in the city of Chicago and that outside of the Cook County Labor Party, “there is

no Farmer-Labor Party movement” in the state. Nevertheless, he expresses optimism that “we will realize our control task set by the Central Committee of 4,000 dues paying members by March 8 [1936], the time of the National Convention of our Party.

AUGUST

“The Communist Election Platform, 1936.” [Aug. 1936] &212; *Large file*. Graphic pdf of a penny campaign pamphlet by the Communist Party USA promoting the national campaign of Earl Browder for President and James W. Ford for Vice-President. Gone are intimations that the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt was “social fascist” and hence the greatest threat to American workers. Rather it is “extreme reaction” which is held to be driving the nation “toward fascism and a new world war,” while the Roosevelt administration is criticized only for its willingness to temporize with these “reactionary forces.” The Republican Party is held up to be “the head of the camp of reaction” in this document. An explicit appeal is made for the “comrades” of the Socialist Party to change course and “unite with us and the mass of the toilers against reaction.” The program of the CPUSA is outlined in detail, with the detailed agenda to be funded by a vague income-based “taxation of the rich.” The slogan “Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism” is used and the party’s continuance of the revolutionary tradition, including that of “the revolutionary Lincoln” is emphasized. This pamphlet exists with multiple variants of pages 15 and 16 &212; the Milwaukee and California versions are both included here.

SEPTEMBER

“The Zinoviev-Kamenev Trial,” by Alexander Bittelman [Sept. 1936] From August 19-24, 1936, was held in Moscow the first of three sensational public “show trials” featuring prominent former members of the Soviet elite accused of complicity in counterrevolutionary conspiracies to commit murder and overthrow the Soviet state. Chief defendants in the first trial, the so-called “Case of the Trotskyite-Zinovievite Terrorist Center,” were G.E. Zinoviev and L.B. Kamenev—former members of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party and of the Council of Peoples’ Commissars. All 16 defendants in this case were tried, sentenced to death, and executed in short order. This article, published as part of the lead essay of the September 1936 issue of the CPUSA’s theoretical journal, *The Communist*, was an initial to orientate party members to the situation in the USSR. Bittelman accuses Trotsky of being a “petty-bourgeois ‘revolutionist’” and likens his alleged criminal complicity in the plot to assassinate Soviet Communist leaders to the effort of the Socialist Revolutionaries to assassinate Bolshevik leaders (including Lenin) during the Russian Civil War. “In this ‘transformation’ of Trotskyism there is nothing especially new. It is no news that certain ideologists of petty-bourgeois ‘revolutionism’ have turned fascist. Mussolini is an outstanding case,” Bittelman notes. Trotsky’s critique of the Soviet constitution is likened to that of Nazi propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels and the implication of this purported convergence is stated with certitude in the wake of the trial by Bittelman, who declares that “*Trotskyism is fascist terrorism.*”

1937

UNSPECIFIED MONTH

“Charles E. Ruthenberg: Fighter for Socialism,” by Dan Ruthenberg [1937] Short biographical sketch of CPUSA founding member and leader C.E. Ruthenberg, published by his son in the Communist press in 1937. The younger Ruthenberg notes that his father attended "Lutheran School and Business College, he had early ambitions for the Lutheran ministry, but these were quickly quenched by his inability to obtain answers to some of the questions he fired at his pastor." From 1917 until the time of his death in early 1927, "there was not one year which did not find him under indictment or sentence," his son notes. His father is depicted as a non-conformist fighter for authentic American values: "The Americanism of C.E. Ruthenberg was not the Americanism of the dollar-chasing exploiters, of blood-smeared generals, of lying, treacherous statesmen, of swindling office-holders, or of tax-dodging capitalists. His Americanism was that of the Declaration of Independence, that of Thomas Paine, of Emerson, of Twain, and of Phillips, Lowell, and Whitman."

1938

FEBRUARY

“John Wilhelmovich Pepper-Pogány: Arrest and Execution Information.” [executed Feb. 8, 1938] Basic arrest and execution details, including a prison photo, of John Pepper (née Jozsef Pogány), Hungarian revolutionary and leading figure in the Communist Party of America during the decade of the 1920s. This record, published in a book by the Memorial Society in Russia in 2000, clearly indicates that the Hungarian Communist retained his American pseudonym for the rest of his life. At the time of his arrest on July 29, 1937, Pepper was living in Moscow and was the head of the publicity department of the People's Commissariat of the Food Industry. Pepper was sentenced to be shot on Feb. 8, 1938 by the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court of the USSR on charges of participation in a counter-revolutionary organization and was executed that same day. Pepper was posthumously rehabilitated by the Military Collegium on May 30, 1956, the record indicates. Those with fast internet may prefer the high-resolution version of this file (1.8 megs).

MARCH

“The Moscow Trials,” by Norman Thomas [March 1938] Article by the leader of the Socialist Party attempting to make sense of the Great Show Trials in Moscow—the third of which, featuring Bukharin in the dock, was held March 2-13, 1938. “These confessions, true, false, or partly true and partly false, are for us who have believed in socialism as the hope of the world the occasion of bitter tears and deep humiliation,” states Thomas, who notes similar patently false confessions happened during the period of the Spanish Inquisition and the witchcraft trials. “I assume that in a regime which makes possible no legal or democratic opposition even within the Communist Party to the decisions of the bureaucracy there have been plots. This was probably especially true in the dark days of 1932-1933....The important thing is that there is no interpretation of these trials which does not bring shame upon the regime,” writes Thomas. He adds that “Lenin was a great enough man to master the amoral tactics which he consciously used with some regard for proportion and achievement. None of his successors has that ability. Insofar as Lenin, yes, and Trotsky, were responsible for this exaltation of

secular Jesuitism as a kind of working class virtue, they must share in the guilt of its complete degeneration under Stalin.... [Stalin's] supreme failure has been an exaltation of a regime which makes suspicion of one's closest comrades inevitable and plots and counterplots the only vehicle of effective political activity." Thomas calls the USSR "a totalitarian state under a monolithic party" and presciently notes the likelihood of a change of party line with some chance of "an alliance or understanding with Hitler."

"Where is Juliet Stuart Poyntz?" by Carlo Tresca [March 1938] Article by the well known syndicalist labor organizer Carlo Tresca in the pages of V.F. Calverton's *Modern Monthly*, charging foul play by the Soviet secret police in the mysterious May 1937 disappearance of the "personal friend of mine for twenty years," Juliet Stuart Poyntz. Poyntz (who in 1925 was formally rebuked for "Loreism"—the American stalking horse for "Trotskyism") retired from public political work in 1934, Tresca states. Thereupon, "she became a GPU agent," being seen in Moscow in the company of know secret police employee George Mink as late as 1936. According to Tresca's testimony here: "In May 1937, I met her on the street and at that time she told me that she had become disgusted with the Soviet regime and the Communist Party in this country. Her attitude was known to the Stalinists. They had reason to fear her because she might break with them and disclose secret matter. About a year ago, Miss Poyntz took a room, in the American Women's Association headquarters. She was seen by friends as late as June 4 or 5, 1937. She has never been seen since." Tresca alludes to the complicity of "agent of the GPU" Shachno Epstein in the Poyntz disappearance and states "I am convinced that an effort was made to recall or kidnap Miss Poyntz to Moscow, and that, if it wasn't found necessary to kill her during the efforts, she was, in fact, taken to Moscow." Carlo Tresca was assassinated in the United States in 1943, purportedly by agents of the Mussolini regime.

APRIL

MAY

Communist Rah-Rah Convention Hoaxes Country on 'Principles,' by James Oneal [events of May 27-31, 1938] *New Leader* editor and Social Democratic Federation factional warrior James Oneal takes aim at the Communist Party and its new "People's Front" line espoused by party General Secretary Earl Browder at its recently completed 10th National Convention in New York. Oneal calls Browder's claim of nearly doubling party membership to 75,000 members since 1936 to be "so much hooey" and part of the CPUSA's "biggest bluff since its members hurled leaflets from buildings in the larger cities, beginning in 1919, calling for 'armed insurrection to overthrow the bourgeois state.'" Oneal mocks Browder and the Communists for moving almost overnight from claims in a few short years that "there were millions, tens of millions, hundreds of millions" of so-called "social fascists" to attempting to make common cause with them in order to "preserve democracy" in the USA. He cites an array of splits and factional disruptions caused by the Communists as evidence that they not only were not truly committed to democracy, but were in fact "not a part of the labor movement." Oneal charges that once in power the Communists would "establish a totalitarian regime like that in Russia, incorporate the unions and cooperatives as organs of the dictatorship, destroy

all other political organizations, put all publications into the hands of agents of the dictatorship, deny public assemblage for all but Communists, exile or imprison dissenters, and shoot all who had the courage to fight the despotism.” Oneal concludes that “Communist totalitarianism differs little from its Nazi and Fascist offshoots.”

JULY

Missing a Year! Where Is Julia Poyntz?” by Herbert Solow [July 2, 1938] Delving into the “clouded background of intrigue,” Herbert Solow outlines the mysterious case of Julia Stuart Poyntz, Nebraska-born radical educator turned Communist and recruiter of undercover operatives for Soviet intelligence. Disappeared from her room at the American Women’s Association Clubhouse, at 353 West 57th St., New York City without a trace in June 1937, friends such as Italian-American anarchist Carlo Tresca were increasingly concerned that she had been kidnapped and returned to the Soviet Union for execution. The most damning circumstantial evidence, Solow intimates, is the lack of the Communist Party to show concern about the whereabouts of its former leading member, best exemplified by one party official making the absurd claim in December 1937, “we have no record of the woman as a member of the Communist Party and no knowledge of her whereabouts for ten years.” Tresca seems to have named Shauchno Epstein, known to have been in New York in May 1937, to a grand jury as having been connected with Poyntz’s disappearance. Solow passes along unsubstantiated rumors that Poyntz had been directly to Leningrad as a secret prisoner aboard the Soviet freighter *Chelyuskinets*.

1939

AUGUST

“To All Active Supporters of Democracy and Peace.” [Aug. 14, 1939] An open letter signed by “400 leading Americans” published on the eve of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact stating that “The Fascists and their allies are well aware that democracy will win if its supporters are united” and that efforts were being made to sow suspicion “between to Soviet Union and other nations interested in maintaining peace.” Domestic “reactionaries” were similarly attempting to “split the democratic front” by “turning anti-fascist feeling against the Soviet Union” by encouraging “the fantastic falsehood that the USSR and the totalitarian states are basically alike,” according to the document. A list of achievements of the USSR aimed “to make it clear that Soviet and Fascist policies are diametrically opposed” was provided.

CP Turns Stool Pigeon to Get Zack: Tries to Force Deportation of Former High Communist Official Who Split with Them: GPU Holds Wife and Child as Hostage in Russia, by Joseph Zack [Aug. 20, 1938] Communist Party founding member Joseph Zack Kornfeder relates his personal saga trying to gain the release of his wife and American-born son from Soviet exile or imprisonment. After going to the State Department for help, Zack found himself embroiled in an immigration dispute in which the claims of his own American birth were pointedly challenged by Labor Department officials. Zack charges that members of the Communist Party were working hand-in-glove with US government officials in an attempt to

create a “frame up” leading to his deportation to Czechoslovakia, where his mother was currently residing and where he had spent his boyhood years. No effort at all had been made by American authorities to gain the release of his family, Zack charges. Rather the government merely sought to pump him for information about the identity of individuals in the United States covertly — an appeal which Zack states he rejected. (Zack would ultimately testify as a friendly witness before the Dies Committee in Sept. 1939).

SEPTEMBER

“The Meaning of the Non-Aggression Pact.” [Sept. 1939] On August 23, 1939, Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany suddenly signed a 10 year treaty of mutual non-aggression, promising to refrain from violence against one another and to refuse to aid any third party engaged in an attack of the other. A secret provision of the treaty provided for the territorial division of Poland by Germany and the USSR. This unsigned editorial in the September 1939 issue of *Soviet Russia Today* was a first attempt by the American Communist Party to acclimate the readers of this mass, “non-party” publication to the new political situation. Stalin is quoted extensively in making the argument that the pact was necessary by the unwillingness of the “dominant powers” of Britain and France to “go beyond words and declarations” and uniting with the USSR to stop Nazi aggression. Included is the text of the public portion of the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact.

Negro Author Sees Disaster if CP Gains Control of Colored Workers, by Claude McKay [Sept. 10, 1938] Letter to the editor of *The New Leader* by Afro-Caribbean-American poet and writer Claude McKay responding to an imprecise summary of his beliefs made the previous July. After first giving credit to the Communists for having “more than any other group” engaged in “the effective organizing of the unemployed and relief workers” and acknowledging that the Communists will inevitably maintain a degree of influence in the trade union movement as did the Socialists before them, McKay states his own terms of opposition to the Communist movement. “I reject absolutely the idea of government by dictatorship, which is the pillar of political Communism,” declares McKay. He also states his opposition to the “Jesuitical tactics of the Communists,” including their “obviously fake” conversion to democracy while at the same time loudly lauding the “bloodiest acts” of the Soviet regime, their “skunking behind the smokescreen of People’s Front and Collective Security” while at the same time defending European imperialism, and their “criminal slandering and persecution of their opponents, who have remained faithful to the true traditions of radicalism and liberalism.” McKay expresses fear of bloc support of the Communist Party by black Americans, observing that in such a case “in the eventuality of a crisis developing between the United States and Soviet Russia, the colored minority might find itself in a very vulnerable and unenviable position.”

DECEMBER

“Defend the Civil Rights of Communists,” by Elizabeth Gurley Flynn [Dec. 1939] CPUSA leader Elizabeth Gurley Flynn makes an appeal for the defense of the Communist Party against a new offensive by the government during the first days of the second great European war.

“Hungry for huge war profits, the barons of Wall Street are speeding to involve the American people in the imperialist war raging in Europe. The blackout of civil liberties is part of Wall Street’s war drive. Capitalist reaction is intent upon depriving the Communists of their civil rights as the preparation for an attack on the economic standards and civil rights of the trade unions, of the working class, of all who oppose American involvement in the imperialist war. Immediate and powerful defense of the civil rights of the Communists is, therefore, of the utmost urgency for the entire labor movement and all who stand for progress and peace.” Blithely ignoring the recently-abandoned anti-fascist line of the Popular Front period, Flynn declares: “It is neither new, strange, nor accidental that the Communist Party, the only party of socialism in the United States, should be the object of the most vicious attacks by the reactionary bourgeoisie and its apologists. Born in the anti-war struggles of the American people against the first imperialist World War, the Communist Party today is the main organizer of mass resistance against America’s involvement in the second imperialist war.” Flynn calls upon “all members of the Communist Party, all workers, friends, sympathizers and others who believe in democratic rights and civil liberties” to contribute \$100 to a “People’s Bail Fund” to win the freedom of victims of state persecution.

“Lenin and Stalin as Mass Leaders,” by William Z. Foster [Dec. 1939] This literary genuflection by The Great Foster was part of a special 60th Birthday issue in honor of The Great Stalin in the theoretical monthly of the CPUSA. Foster waxes lengthily and passionately on the “unmatched ability” of the “masters of Marxian theory, Lenin and Stalin.” Lenin was “bold, resourceful and flexible in his political strategy,” writes Foster, while Stalin, “‘the best pupil of Lenin,’ also displays a high genius of political strategy.” Foster notes that “a strategic move of great importance was Stalin’s bold purge of spies and wreckers from Soviet life, which gave fascism its biggest defeat, upsetting Chamberlain’s and Hitler’s plan of a united attack on the Soviet Union.” Foster also hails “Leninism-Stalinism” (observe rare use of this term) as “the theoretical basis of the international policy of the people’s front.” Foster hails the “veritable miracles of mass activation and struggle” achieved by the superhuman duo. “Wiseacres” ridiculed especially the plan to collectivize Soviet agriculture, Foster notes, “but the Communist Party, headed by Stalin, was undeterred by this pessimism, by the sabotage of Trotskyites and other wreckers” and it “proceeded to a tremendous mobilization and activization of the whole Soviet people.” Foster declares that the CPUSA could successfully teach the masses that “this is an imperialist war, in mobilizing them to struggle for peace and to keep America out of the war,” to organize them to defend their civil rights and enlighten them in the principles of socialism “only if it learns and practices the profound lessons that Lenin and Stalin have to teach us in Marxian theory, political strategy, mass organization, and mass activization.”

1940

UNSPECIFIED MONTH

“Childhood Memories of Charlie: Oral Testimony of Edward Ernest Arnold, Collected by Oakley C. Johnson for a Biography of C.E. Ruthenberg, circa 1940.” Edited transcription of the oral recollections of the best boyhood friend of future Communist Party

leader C.E. Ruthenberg, talking about growing up in Cleveland in the late 1880s and early 1890s. Both Arnold and Ruthenberg were of German-Lutheran extraction and attended a strict Lutheran parochial school together. Ruthenberg, a pampered youngest child, is characterized as studious, intelligent, sometimes mischievous, and possessing leadership qualities from an early age. Ruthenberg's parents are called "fine people" who enforced Sunday church attendance and provided young "Charlie" with a comfortable childhood existence. Out of contact with Ruthenberg after he left public High School to attend business college, Arnold laments the fact that Ruthenberg "got in with the wrong gang" and was "just a man that got started in the wrong direction, that's all." Regardless of his political differences, Arnold is adamant that "Charlie was sincere" and didn't go into political radicalism "out of wanting to be a damned politician.#8221;

"My Boyfriend Charlie: Testimony of Margaret Bengsch Curtis, Collected by Oakley C. Johnson for a Biography of C.E. Ruthenberg, circa 1940." Edited transcription of the oral recollections of the childhood sweetheart of future Communist Party leader. Curtis remembers "Charlie" as an intelligent, neatly attired, bookish, and "sweet boy," who was "almost too bashful to kiss a girl." His mother, a kindly churchgoing homebody, spoke to C.E. around the house in the Low German dialect, but he always answered in English, Curtis recalls. At her 18th birthday party Curtis set C.E. up with his future wife, Rose, making sure that he took her home that night. Though Charlie and Rose later married, C.E. always carried a torch for her, Curtis remembers, although the sentiment was not returned. Neither she nor Rose were supportive of C.E.'s turn to radical politics, Curtis intimates.

"My Friend C.E. Ruthenberg: Testimony of Theodore E. Kretchmar, Collected by Oakley C. Johnson for a Biography of C.E. Ruthenberg, circa 1940." Short biographical sketch of CPUSA founding member and leader C.E. Ruthenberg by a boyhood friend who moved to New York City with Ruthenberg and worked with him at the Selmar-Hess Publishing Company there. Kretchmar describes Ruthenberg's father as a stern Prussian sort of man who ran an old fashioned beer saloon, his mother simple and sweet. "C.E." was bookish and an enthusiast for literature, poetry, drama, and philosophy who briefly aspired to the Lutheran ministry. After finishing Lutheran School at age 13 or 14, Ruthenberg enrolled straight away in business college, Kretchmar indicates, graduating at age 16 to take a job in the office of the Ohio Molding and Picture Frame Company. From there he moved to New York to take a job as a regional sales manager for the Selmar Hess Publishing Co, Kretchmar indicates. Originally a devotee of laissez faire when he came to New York, Ruthenberg was bested in a debate on socialism with a friend and co-worker, McBane Walker. Ruthenberg began reading Karl Marx's Capital to prepare himself for a future debate and wound up converting himself to the socialist cause.

"Letter to Oakley C. Johnson in NYC from Alfred Wagenknecht in Chicago, March 18, 1940." Letter from the former Executive Secretary of the Communist Labor Party about his CPA counterpart, written at the request of Oakley C. Johnson, who was engaged in research for a biography of C.E. Ruthenberg. Two decades after the fact Wagenknecht is demonstrably in error on various historic details, but the letter is useful as a retrospective estimate of factional

politics in the 1919-1922 period. Wagenknecht recalls Ruthenberg as a “tireless worker” who would magically appear “each evening, without fail” at SPA headquarters in Cleveland to work into the night on the office tasks of the Socialist Party of Ohio. An account of his refusal to work in the laundry and subsequent torture is provided. Ruthenberg is characterized as “a very amiable and social character” with a “hankering for poetry and good literature,” a man with the hobby of hiking and gathering bouquets of wild flowers, an “efficient organizer” with a “comradely attitude,” and a “tireless student of revolutionary literature.”

Letter to Oakley C. Johnson in NYC from Alfred Wagenknecht in Chicago, April 5, 1940. Second preparatory communication between former CLP Executive Secretary and Ruthenberg biographer Oakley C. Johnson. Wagenknecht deals with Socialist leader Gene Debs’s visit to the Canton workhouse on June 16, 1918, immediately prior to his famous “Canton Speech,” made as a keynote to the state convention of the Socialist Party of Ohio. Content is esoteric.

“Memories of C.E. Ruthenberg by Israel Amter: Notes from an Interview Conducted by Oakley C. Johnson and Ann Rivington, 1940.” This short memoir, previously an unpublished mass of handwritten scrawl, adds substantially to the store of esoteric detail about the seminal August 1922 raid upon the secret convention of the Communist Party of America at Bridgman, Michigan. It was head of the “Technical Department” L.E. Katterfeld who arranged the location of the gathering, Amter notes, adding that he also arranged the successful 1920 secret convention at the same place. Amter says he rode by train with stool pigeon Francis Morrow and two others from Philadelphia to the convention— that en route Morrow stopped at a drugstore under the pretext of purchasing medicine, going in alone, with a police tail thereby apparently launched leading to the secret convention site near Lake Michigan. With the convention approximately evenly divided between pro-underground party “Geese” and anti-underground party “Liquidationists,” Amter reveals for the first time the discovery of a secret “Center” faction including Liquidationist Jay Lovestone and ostensible Geese Bert Wolfe and Herbert Benjamin. Based upon these secret swing votes, “the Liquidators would have captured the convention if not for the raid,” the former Goose leader Amter declares. Alerted to the forthcoming raid the previous evening, the convention’s business was quickly concluded and starting at midnight a stream of round trips were made by car removing delegates in prioritized sequence. Amter notes that he escaped with the last group to make it out at about 6 am the morning of August 22. Ruthenberg’s failure to leave in a very early group is characterized as the “romantic” misstep of a leader with the “psychology of a captain who wouldn’t leave the ship till the last sailor is out.” Ruthenberg is characterized as a calm, dignified, and widely respected leader— “the force that held the Party together.”

“Memories of C.E. Ruthenberg by J.J. Ballam: Excerpt from an Interview Conducted by Oakley C. Johnson and Ann Rivington, June 3, 1940.” Fascinating unpublished memoir, previously a mass of handwritten scrawl, by a feisty factionalist founder of the Communist Party of America. Ballam relates details of Lenin’s famous “Letter to American Workers,” which he says was delivered to him, addressed to Boston’s Latvian Branch No. 1—the nexus of the proto-Communist movement in America, with which the non-Latvian Ballam was associated. “Pages were lost,” Ballam notes. In Ballam’s view Ruthenberg was consistently opposed to factionalism, refused to engage in gossip, and was driven to work 18

hour days on behalf of the party. He is depicted as straight-laced, rather stiff and dignified in bearing, an efficient administrator, and an able extemporaneous speaker despite a monotone delivery and an absence of rhetorical tricks. Ruthenberg's personal relationship with William Z. Foster— caricatured in the scholarly literature as being a ceaseless and bitter factional opponent— is recalled as having been generally cordial, with Ruthenberg having "accepted Foster from the beginning as a co-worker and accepted him as the trade union leader." Ruthenberg's behavior during the raid on the 1922 Bridgman Convention is portrayed as courageous. Ballam emphasizes a similarity of leadership style between Ruthenberg and Earl Browder.

"Memories of C.E. Ruthenberg by Anna Damon: Excerpt from an Interview Conducted by Oakley C. Johnson and Ann Rivington, 1940." Short memoir of the C.E. Ruthenberg collected from his party comrade and common-law wife at the time of the Communist leader's death. Damon offers exact details of Ruthenberg's fatal illness— a chronically inflamed appendix which ruptured the night of Feb. 26/27, 1927. No mention is made of heroic last words at the hospital (frequently quoted in hagiographic recountings of his life in the party press). Rather Ruthenbeg, given a final saline injection to revive him, "he just waved his arm, several times, as if to encourage everyone." Ruthenberg is characterized as a dedicated, modest, and economical man with an affection for long walks in the country and detective stories. "He was considered very stiff and correct but was a very fine human being. You'd have a hard time getting close to him. But when you did, there was the finest man! He said he built a fence around him to protect himself. He had a fear of being hurt and being exploited by people," Damon recalls. Damon, National Secretary of International Labor Defense at the time of her death in 1944, indicates that she was the first Boston District Organizer of the underground Communist Party of America— a position previously believed held by Antoinette Konikow.

"Memories of C.E. Ruthenberg by Charles Dirba: Excerpt from an Interview Conducted by Oakley C. Johnson and Ann Rivington, 1940." Brief memoir of C.E. Ruthenberg collected by Oakley C. Johnson in 1940 for a biography which was finally published only in 1957. Dirba, a former assistant to Ruthenberg, served as the Executive Secretary of the parallel organization calling itself the Central Caucus during the last part of 1921, remaining at that post until January 1922. Although better qualified than any to shed light on that confusing period of underground history, Dirba only acknowledges that "the Federation group didn't have much ground on which to stand," and that their attempt to send John Ballam and an unnamed second individual to Moscow to change the position of the Comintern was met only with "scolding." Dirba says he refused to serve in an official capacity after the Comintern's views were made clear but continued to pay dues to the dissident organization, returning to the regular CPA only in the fall of 1922. Ruthenberg is characterized as efficient and dedicated, more oriented to detail work than a public leadership role, and a consistent adherent of party unity.

"Memories of C.E. Ruthenberg by Bill Dunne: Excerpt from an Interview Conducted by Oakley C. Johnson, 1940." This interview with William F. Dunne was collected for a biography of C.E. Ruthenberg. Dunne, a factional opponent of Ruthenberg, makes no pretense

of having been an acolyte— Ruthenberg is called “uninspired” and “monstrously vain.” “He was no scholar, he couldn’t write — but he was a gentleman. His relations with the Party were always very formal.... He would become personally offended if he didn’t get the deference which he expected,” Dunne recalls. Detail is given on the exact location of the CPA’s underground headquarters in early 1922 (an apartment 11 St. Luke’s Place, New York City). Also interestingly Dunne, with the benefit of hindsight, characterizes the Communist Party’s majority faction as being one of “Pepper and Lovestone.” Dunne declares: “Ruthenberg’s big mistake was to allow himself to be used by the Lovestone caucus.... Pepper and Lovestone began caucusing and they dragged Ruthenberg into it and made him their front man.”

“Memories of C.E. Ruthenberg by M. Golos: Excerpt from an Interview Conducted by Oakley C. Johnson and Ann Rivington, 1940.” Memoir of C.E. Ruthenberg by CPA Russian Federationist M. Golos— not to be confused with Jacob “Red” Golos of Soviet espionage fame. Golos provides esoteric detail regarding defense work in the aftermath of the January 1920 raids and of the 1920 Ruthenberg faction split from the Communist Party of America. With regard to the deportations, Golos remarks: “Anybody who put up a fight wasn’t actually deported. Only outstanding anarchists were deported whether they wanted to be or not. Many wanted to be deported, however. They wanted to go back. So when they were asked ‘Are you for the overthrow of the U.S. government?’ they said, ‘Yes.’” Golos points out that even factional opponents held Ruthenberg with respect and calls him “a boss, a business man, everything had to be just so when he was in the office.”

“Memories of C.E. Ruthenberg by Rachele Ragozin: Excerpt from an Interview Conducted by Oakley C. Johnson and Ann Rivington, 1940.” Memoir of C.E. Ruthenberg by his girlfriend of the 1920-1922 period, Rachele Ragozin. Ragozin provides outstanding esoteric detail about the first Bridgman Convention, held in 1920, at which she first met and fell in love with the Communist Party leader. Two decades later and 13 years after his death, the torch still clearly burns for him— Ruthenberg is called a “warm and affectionate person,” and is characterized as non-factional by nature and politically driven. Ragozin claims to have smuggled out of prison a program at the time of the establishment of the Workers Party of America in December 1921— she indeed makes further (rather dubious) claims at having smuggled out additional “pamphlets, leaflets, programs, articles” with the help of a Sing Sing inmate trusty who is said to have left documents for her in the women’s restroom. Ragozin also records the decision of Ruthenberg’s co-thinker I.E. Ferguson to drop out of the movement, quoting him as presciently declaring at the time of his release from Sing Sing in the spring of 1920: “There’ll be a lot of trouble in this struggle and a lot of dead, and I propose to live my life for myself. I sympathize with you, but I want to live. You’ll be arrested in 6 months. All the leaders will be sacrificed, and I’m not ready to do that.” Includes biographical detail about Rachele Ragozin, one only three women present at the 1920 Bridgman Convention and probably the only female delegate.

“Memories of C.E. Ruthenberg by Alfred Wagenknecht: Excerpt from an Interview Conducted by Oakley C. Johnson and Ann Rivington, 1940.” This material was gathered for a biography of C.E. Ruthenberg in 1940, even though the book was published by

International Publishers only in 1957. Wagenknecht concentrate upon the year 1918, providing detail about the year which he, Ruthenberg, and Charles Baker spent in the Ohio State Workhouse at Canton, imprisoned for speaking against the European War. Wagenknecht—Executive Secretary of the Communist Labor Party and nominally a rival of Ruthenberg of the CPA in 1919-20—credits Ruthenberg for his election as State Secretary of the Socialist Party of Ohio in November 1916. The two shared a cell for a time at Canton, where they played checkers, argued over Ruthenberg's prison pamphlet, *Growing Toward Socialism*, and feasted on smuggled apples and white bread. Includes details about their mistreatment over refusal to work in the prison laundry. Wagenknecht offers no assessment of Ruthenberg's personality, ideology, or motivations.

“Memories of C.E. Ruthenberg by William W. Weinstone: Excerpt from an Interview Conducted by Oakley C. Johnson and Ann Rivington, 1940.”

Short memoir of the Executive Secretary of the Workers Party of America by a man who was for a time his assistant. Ruthenberg is characterized as a “unifying force,” able to appeal both to language federationists for his appreciation of the utility of federations, and his hard work and effective leadership, as well as to native English-speaking Americans. Weinstone asserts that the factional groups of the 1920s were not named for Ruthenberg and Foster, their nominal leaders—both of whom actually existed “above the battle”—but rather were known as the “Lovestone group” and the “Cannon group.” Ruthenberg is said to have a dislike for Jim Cannon (regarded as lazy and unproductive), Ben Gitlow (a loud politician), and Louis Fraina (said by Weinstone to have been viewed by Ruthenberg as a “God damned leftist”). Ruthenberg is said to have been anti-factional by nature, ultra-loyal to the Russian Revolution and the Comintern, and to have been well acquainted with the Marxist corpus in translation.

“Memories of C.E. Ruthenberg by Morris Wolf: Excerpt from an Interview Conducted by Ann Rivington, 1940.”

Unflattering portrait of C.E. Ruthenberg by his attorney during his 1918 trial for undermining the American draft effort. Wolf—a leader of the Socialist Party of Ohio even before Ruthenberg joined—characterizes Ruthenberg as consumed by a strong messianic complex. “When he spoke, every other word was ‘Jesus,’” Wolf recalls. Although possessed of a strong intellect and a rare ability to extract the thesis of sociological books after a quick skimming, Ruthenberg is portrayed as sarcastic and envious of those with winsome personal magnetism. “His objective was to become greater — to project Ruthenberg as a personality, therefore he had to be honest, punctilious, and unsparing. A great leader was like that,” Wolf observes, adding, “The same man could shoot his friends after the revolution.”

1941

JANUARY

Harry Gannes Dies: *Daily Worker* Foreign Editor Succumbs to Complications

Following Operation for Brain Tumor, Was 40 Years Old. (*Sunday Worker*) [event of Jan. 4, 1941] Obituary from the official organ of the Communist Party USA detailing the life of Harry Gannes, former Foreign Editor of the paper. Gannes, born in England in 1900, was a key youth

leader of the fledgling Young Workers League, before (presumably Comintern) work in China in 1932-33. Gannes was Foreign Editor for a decade, authoring a regular column on contemporary political affairs. In 1936 he co-authored a book with Theodore Draper on the Spanish Civil War for Alfred A. Knopf, the pair being given a three week deadline for submission of the manuscript and finishing in just 17 days. Gannes was diagnosed with a brain tumor late in 1939 and indicted by the Roosevelt Administration for passport fraud shortly thereafter. He underwent surgery at Jewish Hospital in Brooklyn on Dec. 16, 1939, but contracted pneumonia following the surgery and was bedridden for most of the rest of his life, according to the *Sunday Worker* piece.

1944

MAY

“Letter to Oakley C. Johnson and Ann Rivington in New York City from Rose Ruthenberg in Lakewood, Ohio, May 15, 1944.” [excerpt] Note from the first wife of C.E. Ruthenberg to his biographers. Mrs. Ruthenberg provides detail about her situation during the 1918 incarceration of her husband, during which she was able to make ends meet due to the Socialist Party of Ohio continuing to pay C.E.’s salary of \$30 per week. In exchange, Rose Ruthenberg worked in the office daily on clerical tasks, she states.

“Minutes of the Convention of the Communist Party, New York, May 20, 1944.” Immediately prior to the convention founding the “Communist Political Association” there was a short pro forma convention of the Communist Party USA (technically the organization’s 12th) held to officially dissolve the CPUSA to make room for establishment of the CPA. After singing “The Star Spangled Banner,” the assembled 220 delegates and 173 alternates heard opening remarks by National Chairman William Z. Foster who set the stage for General Secretary Earl Browder, who made the formal motion for dissolution of the CPUSA. The convention approved Browder’s motion unanimously before voting to adjourn. This document contains the full text of the official published minutes of this short gathering.

“Constitution of the Communist Political Association: Adopted by the Constitutional Convention, May 20-22, 1944.”“The basic document of organizational law for the Communist Party during its brief interlude as the “Communist Political Association.” The completely new organizational structure called for in this document began at the local level with geographic “clubs,” democratically electing officers annually as part of democratically elected state organizations. Governing the party would be a set of national officers, headed by (all democratically elected) a “President” and with an indeterminate number of “Vice-Presidents,” a Secretary, a Treasurer, and an indeterminately sized “National Committee”“which in turn was to democratically elect a “National Board” of indeterminate size. This National Organization was to have the power to establish regional District organizations, headed by (democratically

elected) District Committees. The constitution stated “Every member is obligated to fight with all his strength against any and every effort, whether it comes from abroad or from within, to impose upon the American people the arbitrary will of any selfish minority group or party or clique or conspiracy, or to interfere with the unqualified right of the majority to direct the destinies of our country.” For all such pious protestations of its adherence to democratic norms, in practice the 1944 Constitutional Convention elected the Nominating Committee’s entire slate of 40 proposed members and 20 proposed alternates as a National Committee as well as a slate of officers without contest or dissent.

1945

APRIL

“On the Dissolution of the Communist Party of the United States,” by Jacques Duclos. [April 1945] One of the seminal documents in the history of the American Communist movement. In 1944, head of the CPUSA Earl Browder launched the party on a “new course,” disavowing the “political party” model for the organization and replacing it with a “Communist Political Association. This change was formally ratified by the 12th National Conference of the CPUSA, held in May 1944. This article by French CP leader Jacques Duclos appeared in the April 1945 issue of the French party’s theoretical magazine and was quickly recognized by American Communists as a signal from Moscow as to the inappropriateness of the “new course” undertaken in 1944. When Browder refused to change course again, a factional struggle ensued, resulting in short order in Browder’s removal from power and expulsion from the party. Despite the document’s length and detail, Duclos’ unleashes only one particularly harsh paragraph: “Despite declarations regarding recognition of the principles of Marxism, one is witnessing a notorious revision of Marxism on the part of Browder and his supporters, a revision which is expressed in the concept of a long-term class peace in the United States, of the possibility of the suppression of the class struggle in the postwar period and of establishment of harmony between labor and capital.”

JUNE

“Speech to the CPA National Committee,” by Earl Browder [June 18, 1945] This is a very lengthy defense of the wartime policies of his administration by recently cashiered General Secretary Earl Browder. Browder makes his defense by reciting a massive number of quotations from his own wartime speeches and writings as well as two from Lenin — this endless regurgitation representing well over half of the 9500-word excerpt here. Stripping away his self-congratulatory bluster, Browder’s basic argument is that “The basic soundness of American Communists’ wartime policy had not been directly challenged in the present discussion until the reports today.” He holds that his uncontested policy was sound and rational, made necessary by the need to establish a Second Front in Europe and to support the Roosevelt administration against an alliance of Republican and conservative anti-Administration forces who were empowered in the rightward-tilting Congressional elections of 1942. The lack of Democratic Party dynamism in the aftermath of the 1942 vote demonstrated “the Democratic Party could be the vehicle for a people’s victory only when it was supplemented by independent organizations of labor and the people (including dissident

Republicans), in a broad coalition,~ Browder declares. Browder maintains the CPUSA's policy of guiding the labor movement to compliant support of the Roosevelt administration in matters of its personnel or policies was "entirely correct" since a militant policy would have resulted in a Dewey victory in 1944. Browder acknowledges that "We have undoubtedly been suffering from a number of vulgarizations and distortions of our correct political line, which require correction," but argues that their correction can "only upon the foundation of that political line and not upon its abandonment." Browder rejects charges that the policies with he was associated were a manifestation of "revisionism," since "our policy since 1942 has been basically correct, has proved itself so in life, and has brought victories and advances in all fields to the nation and to the working class, including the matter from the change from Party to Association."I

1946

Open Letter from Earl Browder in Yonkers, NY, to the Yonkers Club, CPUSA, Feb. 1, 1946. Defense against expulsion charges by the recently defrocked General Secretary of the Communist Party USA to the primary party unit to which he belonged, the Yonkers Club of the CPUSA, which was constitutionally charged with initiating the expulsion process. Browder defends himself point-by-point from charges preferred against him on Jan. 28, 1946 that he had "advanced Keynesian ideas" and demonstrated political passivity by failing to attend meetings of the Yonkers Club. Browder acknowledges having stayed away from meetings, but indicates that this decision was agreed upon with the Party leadership to minimize political turbulence following his removal as General Secretary. Browder had been further preoccupied finding work to support his family, he notes, as his notoriety as a Communist and his official disrepute within the Communist movement presenting dual "barbed-wire entanglements" which made his situation particularly difficult. Browder sharply denies having advanced Keynesian ideas, noting that this accusation was of recent currency via an article by nemesis William Z. Foster in the Jan. 20, 1946 issue of *The Worker*. A lengthy appendix to the letter to the Yonkers Club launches an assault on Foster's leadership, alleging the CPUSA had been led away from the decision of the July Convention to support the Truman Administration as the continuer and leader of the grand Roosevelt coalition. Instead war had been declared on Truman as the "chief enemy," Browder declares, with the CPUSA alone abandoning the "Roosevelt-labor-democratic" coalition to pursue a third party oppositional strategy. Browder charges that "under the slogan of 'vanguardism' Foster has put our Party membership in a situation of bafflement and unclarity, isolated from their former allies, and uncertain who are friends and who are enemies." Disaffection had emerged in party ranks as a result of this alleged "anarcho-syndicalist" turn, accompanied by wide demoralization, dropping membership figures, and a new round of destructive factionalism. A return to the July 1945 line supporting the Truman Administration as head of a grand coalition is demanded.

"Appeal of Earl Browder to the National Committee, CPUSA Against the Decision of the National Board for His Expulsion, Feb. 8, 1946. With his expulsion confirmed by the executive of the national CPUSA (National Board) on February 5, 1946, ousted General Secretary Earl Browder issued this final appeal to the governing National Committee on Feb. 8. Browder again attempts to methodically undercut the case against him, charging undue haste, violations of normal party procedure, and a series of factual falsifications and misrepresentations of his actions by his factional enemies, headed by William Z. Foster.

Browder denies that he engaged in factional activities or that he in any way departed from the party line with respect to his testimony before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Browder's nemesis, William Z. Foster, is charged with possessing "fantastic factional hatred" and accused of having "stultified and confused" the labor movement by acting as an "irresponsible factionalist [chatterbox]." Browder defends his mimeographed economic commentary in the newsletter *Distributors Guide* (circulation: 200) and reiterates the dishonesty of the charge of organizational passivity for having skipped meetings of his local unit, the Yonkers Club. He defends his statement critical of party policy made before the executive of the Yonkers Club, declaring that "nothing that I there expressed can be made grounds for expulsion without abolishing all inner democracy within the Party." He asks for the National Committee to overturn the National Board's confirmation of his expulsion.

1954

“Letter to Theodore Draper in New York City from Max Bedacht in Frenchtown, NJ, Dec. 13, 1954.” This letter to historian Ted Draper from Communist Labor Party founding member Max Bedacht serves as a reminder of the limitations inherent in oral history and memoirs produced decades after the fact vs. careful examination of archival documents and the contemporary press. Despite having the benefit of whatever limited materials were available to him in his personal library in answering a number of Draper's queries, and despite having time to compose his answers in writing, the participant Bedacht is unable to reconstruct a correct timeline of major events (divergences from the archival record being cataloged here in a very extensive set of footnotes). This is intended as no reflection on Bedacht's honesty or competence—he was both honest and competent—but rather a much more important illustration of the inevitable deficiencies of ex-post facto memoir accounts, be they written or verbal. Historians should bear in mind always that participant memoir accounts (particularly those provided many years after the fact) are in no way the “last word” on various questions of history. Indeed, the contrary is true: distant recollections are but the *first word*, from which point examination of archival material and the contemporary press might be more profitably made to “settle” the various questions of history which emerge. Of particular interest to historians of the early American Communist Party is Bedacht's account here of the origin of the name of Abram Jakira's underground-oriented “Goose Caucus” of 1922: “We had given them the name of geese because they had only a few talking leaders. And when one of them flapped his wings and quacked, they all flopped and all quacked in exact imitation.”

1955

“Letter to Theodore Draper in New York City from Max Bedacht in Frenchtown, NJ, Jan. 20, 1955.” In this letter to historian Ted Draper, Communist Party leader Max Bedacht provides interesting impressionistic answers to a number of Draper's questions about the early American Communist movement. Bedacht offers an intelligent critique of Left Wing thinking in the party split of 1919: “I think I am justified in saying that all of us—at least

subconsciously—believed that world events had relieved us and our revolutionary organizations of the tedious and patience-consuming job of weaning the American working masses away from their bourgeois illusions. Since such a belief is wrong under any conditions, the propaganda of the Left based upon it became mere radical-sounding phrases with little or no concrete meaning.” He sees the division of the Communist movement into two organizational streams as a product of different paces of “sobering up” about the prospects of imminent revolutionary transformation in the USA. Bedacht also provides an extensive account of the factional division in the Communist Party which swirled around the Labor Party question in 1922-24. Bedacht testifies that “It was in the course of the discussions and deliberations about efforts for the development of a broad Labor Party movement that the concepts about the possibility and the need of a legal, respectively illegal Communist Party in America crystallized. Out of these discussions the Geese were born as an organized group. They had ghosted about before around questions such as ‘force and violence.’ But the discussions about our approach to the masses via a Labor Party touched off the ‘final conflict.’ Our side became more and more convinced that the successful and effective functioning with and within a Labor Party would require and make possible the open functioning of a legal Communist Party. The illegalists-in-principle, on the other hand, for whom control meant leadership, could see a protection for the purity of the principles of the Party only in the underground.” The botched handling of the Farmer-Labor Party question in 1924 “broke up the behind the scenes bridge between us and Fitzpatrick” and “initiated the bitter and destructive fight within the CP between the Foster group and the Ruthenberg (later Lovestone) group,” Bedacht recalls. “Foster accused the National Committee of the Party that it broke faith with Fitzpatrick,” Bedacht notes.

1956

SEPTEMBER

“Interview with Ludwig E. Katterfeld by Theodore Draper.” [conducted September 8, 1956] Extensive extract of the lengthy interview conducted by historian Ted Draper with Communist Labor Party founder and CI Rep Ludwig Katterfeld during the course of his researches for *The Roots of American Communism*. Katterfeld was 75 years old at the time, attempting to recall events which took place 3 decades previously; consequently, there are certain insufficiencies with this document as a primary source for which the historian must compensate. One of the most intriguing recollections of Katterfeld is that he was in joint control of the party at some point in the early 1920s— he wrongly recalls with the then-incarcerated Gitlow. This provides a working theory to explain one of the mysteries of the United Communist Party: why it was Katterfeld and not nominal Executive Secretary Alfred Wagenknecht (“Paul Holt”) who delivered the report of the CEC of the UCP to the Woodstock Unity Convention of 1921. Included is a photograph of Katterfeld in 1922 from the Davenport collection.

1958

APRIL

“Letter to Oakley C. Johnson in NYC from S.J. Rutgers in Amersfoort, Holland, April 21, 1958.” Congratulatory message from revolutionary socialist pioneer and Dutch Communist S.J. Rutgers to Oakley C. Johnson upon the publication of his biography

of C.E. Ruthenberg. "Ruthenberg knew how to combine the application of fundamental laws in the development of society with a personal approach towards co-workers that mirrored those fundamentals," Rutgers writes. "The hero of your book is a splendid example of combining theory and practice and avoiding right and left deviations and thereby achieving results." Rutgers sees parallels between the situation facing Ruthenberg and the contemporary world, in which the "World System of Socialism is getting the upper hand in [the] military and economic sense," forcing "temporary concessions to certain groups, in order to divide and rule." He declares that "This leads to right deviations in our ranks and the illusions of the broader masses."